



Thursday, September 24, 2015

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NO-SHOWS COST THE NHS £1.5M

Report by Heather Large

PATIENTS failed to turn up to nearly 15,000 appointments at Dudley's hospitals in just six months – costing the NHS £1.5 million.

Hundreds of hours of clinic time were lost due to people missing their out-patient appointments between January and June this year.

Paula Clark, chief executive of The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Russells Hall Hospital and the Guest Outpatient Centre, both in Dudley, and Corbett Outpatient Centre in Stourbridge, said a total of 14,817 sessions were missed.

She is now urging patients to warn hospital staff if they can't make it, so someone else can have the slot.

Every time a patient fails to show, it costs the hospital trust an average of around £70. This includes the staffing resource wasted and the cost of additional letters and time taken to reschedule appointments.

Ms Clark said: "When a patient doesn't attend on the day, it's too late to offer their slot to somebody else. If patients can't attend their appointment, it's really important that they let us know so we can reschedule for another time and offer the appointment to somebody else who needs it."

"To help reduce the number of DNAs (did not attend) we have introduced a text message reminder service which reminds patients a few days before they are due to have an appointment."

The free text reminders contain the date and time of the appointment as well as the location and name of the clinician that the patient is due to see. The hospital trust has previously posted reminder messages on its website, urging people to contact staff if they are unable to attend.

Waste

Last year, between January 1 and December 31, a total of 40,719 appointments were missed by patients.

In July, health secretary Jeremy Hunt said missed hospital appointments cost the taxpayer £750m and missed GP appointments cost £162m. It's estimated 6.9 million slots go to waste because people do not turn up.

Mr Hunt said patients who miss appointments should be told how much they have cost the NHS. He also wants to display the cost of prescription medicines on packets in a bid to reduce medicine waste.

The bill at Dudley comes as bosses work to balance the books in the wake of Government funding cuts. Bosses have been reviewing the positions of temporary staff, those on fixed-term contracts, and bank and agency workers. They have also been looking at reducing overtime and recruitment to non-clinical vacancies to claw back costs.

HUNDREDS JOIN IN BATTLE OF BRITAIN TRIBUTE



Brian Lee from the Worcestershire Regimental Association lays a wreath during the Battle of Britain service at Dudley Cenotaph

HUNDREDS paid solemn tribute to those who fought in the Battle of Britain at a remembrance parade and service in Dudley.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the fight in the skies above Britain in the Second World War that effectively halted Nazi Germany's invasion of Britain by defeating the Luftwaffe.

With the anniversary being marked across the country, Dudley's annual Battle of Britain thanksgiving commemoration took on greater significance on Sunday.

Veterans, RAF members and the Air Train-

ing Corps paraded ahead of the service at St Thomas and St Luke Church, also known as Top Church, in High Street.

Around 130 Air Cadets marched through the town creating a spectacle for hundreds of people lining the streets and attending the service.

The cadets came from eight squadrons in the Black Country including Stourbridge, Halesowen and West Bromwich.

The service was held in the church before the cadets led a parade back through the town to take a salute from dignitaries on the steps

of Dudley Council House. Cadets then lined up in front of Dudley's cenotaph before the Last Post signalled a two minute silence and wreath laying ceremony.

Among speakers was John Deane, aged 78, of Maygrove Road, Kingswinford, who joined the RAF in 1955, serving in Iraq and Cyprus. He now works with Air Training Corps inspiring young people. He is also member of the Dudley branch of the RAF Association.

"I'm proud to be here and see so many people come out to take part in the event," he said.

TRAFFIC

Short-cut danger gap is closed up

A CUT-THROUGH on a busy road in Halesowen is being closed off during a roadworks project.

Highways engineers are working to shut the gap in the central reservation in Kent Road near the Co-op supermarket. Councillors claim the junction needed closing to avoid there being an accident.

Halesowen's Councillor Hilary Bills said: "We are closing off a gap in the central reservation at Kent Road following complaints about motorists driving along the wrong side of the road as a shortcut to reach a new supermarket."

BANK

HSBC decides to shut down branch

A BRANCH of HSBC will close in December after a 'significant fall' in the number of people using it.

The Brierley Hill branch, in High Street, will close its doors for the final time on December 4. Officials said they were working with the five staff to find them roles at other branches.

Spokesman Sorrel Beynon said: "Unfortunately use of the Brierley Hill branch has fallen significantly over the past few years and we have taken the difficult decision to close it."

PLANNING

Campaigners' joy as pub is saved

CAMPAIGNERS battling to stop a pub being replaced by a convenience store have claimed victory after the scheme was thrown out.

New River Retail had proposed to tear down the Mapley Inn, in Halesowen, and build a Co-Op.

Members of Dudley Council's development control committee decided the pub was well used by the community and too close to existing outlets to let the plan go ahead.

But New River Retail said they believed grounds given for refusing the scheme would not stand up on appeal.

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STRUM-THING RATHER SPECIAL



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Extra patrols due to drugs concern

DRUG pushers operating near shops and homes are causing distress to families living nearby, prompting police action.

As a result, plans to install CCTV in the Shell Corner area have been put forward.

Ward councillors have been working with police on ways to tackle the issue. Officers have stepped up patrols since reports came in of alleged criminality and anti-social behaviour.

Shell Corner Partnership community group have been working to bring improvements to the area.

Councillor Stuart Henley said: "There is an issue of drugs that goes on day and night in the area and the shop keepers and directors of businesses passed this information on to me.

Suspicious

"I have emailed the local sergeant to look in to the issue and I have contacted someone at the council about getting CCTV installed in the area to try and catch any anti-social behaviour or drug issues going on."

Fellow ward member Karen Shake-

speare urged people to contact police if they spot any suspicious activity in the area.

"Due to the members of the public and councillors reporting and raising issues with the police, this has allowed them to respond to concerns with increased manpower," she said.

Councillor Hilary Bills, a ward representative and Dudley Council cabinet member, added: "Our meetings are always well attended, which is a testament to this good relationship."

"The police take residents' issues seriously and always act on them."

"During these austere times, when police resources are dwindling, it is important that the community becomes more active in reporting worrying activity to the police."

Halesowen South Neighbourhood Sergeant Debra Rowbotham said: "The local community has complained about anti-social behaviour in and around the Shell Corner area. This is causing distress to residents who are worried about the impact on the community. We are increasing patrols and working with partner agencies to tackle the problem."

Past mayor hands more than £33k to charities

A FORMER Mayor of Dudley presented more than £33,000 to two charities at a special civic reception.

Councillor Margaret Aston, who was mayor of the borough from 2014 to 2015, raised £33,054 for Guide Dogs and Action Heart charities.

Representatives from both charities visited the Mayor's Parlour to each receive £16,527 at a reception hosted by the current Mayor Councillor Steve Walther.

Councillor Aston said: "It was a real privilege to spend the year raising money for these two worthy causes. I was overwhelmed with the generosity of the people of the borough."

She added: "I hope this money will go a long way to help these two charities with their work."

Among events held for the charities during her year in office were council staff football and cricket matches.

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Walther, said: "The role of the Mayor is a fabulous privilege because it gives you the opportunity to work with community groups and volunteers and help raise money for charity. I hope people will support my five charities in the same way they have supported Councillor Aston's so generously."

The charities that the current mayor is raising funds for include The Hope Centre, Halesowen; The What Centre, Stourbridge; More Mascots Please, Brierley Hill; The Georgina Unit at Russells Hall Hospital; and the West Midlands branch of Lupus UK.

Two out of three pub schemes are rejected

CAMPAIGNERS have claimed a victory after two controversial plans for supermarkets to be built on pub sites were thrown out by planners.

Residents have been battling proposals by New River Retail to tear down the Maypole Inn, Halesowen, and replace it with a Co-Operative convenience store. They have also fought plans for a store on the car park of the Ashwood Inn, Wordsley.

The public gallery at Dudley Council's development control committee was filled with cheers as both schemes were rejected on Monday. A similar plan to build a Co-Op store on the car park at The Crown, in Netherton, was approved after councillors received only four letters of objection.

New River Retail are now considering their next step. Defiant campaigners said they were ready to continue the battle. New River Retail has submitted plans at several pubs across the Black Country after brewery Marston's sold 202 pubs in a £90 million deal.

Demolish

The plan to demolish the Maypole was discussed by the planning committee following a visit to the site. Chairman Councillor Qadar Zada said he could see no planning grounds to refuse the proposal. Councillors disagreed. Councillor Colin Elcock said: "This is a great pub and we should take into consideration people do not want to lose it." The Bassnake Road pub had been listed as an 'asset of community value'. Members were told this carried no weight in planning terms.

But councillors refused on the grounds the pub was well used by the community and too close to existing retail outlets.

Councillors next discussed plans for the Ashwood Inn, in Sandringham Road. While the pub would be retained there were concerns over the loss of car parking spaces and traffic congestion. Councillor Paul Brothwood said: "The residents of Wordsley have made it absolutely clear they do not support this application."

Mr Martin Hughes, spokesman for New River Retail, said: "We have heard the grounds given for refusal and believe these will not be sustained at appeal."

Poundland founder opens charity



Poundland founder Steve Smith, centre, with charity bosses Karen Muller and Steve Smith with some of the items

POUNDLAND founder Steve Smith was the guest of honour at the opening of a new charity in the Black Country.

Mr Smith was invited along to Discover U, at Unit 20 on Delph Road, Brierley Hill. The charity offers an all new support programme for people with learning disabilities. The base covers 15,000 sq ft and runs a four day work programme specialising in the making and design of homeware.

Former Poundland boss Mr

Smith paid a visit on Saturday. Mr Smith, originally from Willenhall, said: "It was an absolute honour to be asked to open the charity."

It was amazing talking to the parents, who were saying that before the programme some of their children were finding it hard to get up in the morning but now they are happy and full of life."

Mr Smith hopes to find more funding for those with learning disabilities in the local area.

He added: "It's about getting

more people involved in charities like this in the local area, and most importantly helping them get on a road to a brighter future."

Owners Karen Muller and the VIP's namesake Steve Smith came up with the initiative after being made redundant. Ms Muller added: "We were based in Lye and when our other programme closed it was devastating for those who attended."

"We knew that we needed to continue with the hard work but at new premises."

Labour hold seat at by-election

LABOUR have held on to a seat in a Sandwell Council by-election which was prompted by the death of a councillor.

Danny Millard has been elected to the seat in Blackheath ward with 915 votes. He takes the seat previously held by Malcolm Bridge, who died in June.

Mr Millard beat Tory Shirley Ching (544 votes) into second place. UKIP's Ian Keeling was third with 287 and Green candidate Ben Groom was fourth. Turnout was just 19.3 per cent.

Mr Bridges had been elected to the ward in 2010 and had previously represented Bristall. Sandwell leader Councillor Darren Cooper said: "This was a fantastic result for Labour, particularly when you consider that we have fought this by-election in the middle of a national leadership election."

Good beer award for stadium club

STOURBRIDGE and Halesowen branch of the Campaign for Real Ale presented its annual club of the year award to Halesowen Athletic and Cycling Club in Manor Way. The club at Manor Abbey Stadium re-opened in July following a £180,000 revamp.

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Traders in a £25,000 bid to improve town centre

TRADERS want to raise £25,000 to fund a new scheme aimed at boosting business in Halesowen.

More attractive public areas by shops, improved security and regular attractions and events are among the plans in the pipeline.

Halesowen Chamber of Trade wants to have the town designated as a Business Improvement District (BID).

The BID scheme will see firms join forces to create a single company, with each member paying a levy.

Members will then get to decide how the money is spent on improvements, which it hopes would lead to more footfall.

The chamber needs at least £25,000 to market the BID, which businesses have to vote on to accept.

BID representative on the chamber, Barry Wheeler, said they hoped the scheme would garner support.

"Hopefully we would see new businesses come to the town and existing shops and traders want to stay," he said. "It will help to improve the experience for shoppers coming into Halesowen."

Once the initial sum is raised further talks will be held with Dudley Council officials to develop the scheme.

It is hoped that between £75,000 and almost £180,000 a year could be raised to spend on improvements. It could be in place within a year, if approved.

■ Traders ensure town is blooming — page 14

Metal heritage and art display

A LIBRARY is hosting a exhibition unearthing the Black Country's heritage featuring a well-known artist.

Tipton Library, in Unity Walk, will be hosting its popular history day on Saturday, which features an exhibition by Luke Perry, an historian and metalworks artist based in Cradley Heath.

Mr Perry has created photographic portraits of workers at Solid Swivel manufacturers in Cradley Heath, housed in metal frames assembled and crafted from waste metal found on the factory floor. This exhibition was a commission as part of the Black country echoes project in 2014.

It will open at Tipton library's Local History Day and run until the end of October.

Fish stolen from nature reserve

FISH have been stolen from a pool at a nature reserve near the Rowley Hills.

Police are stepping up patrols at Warrens Hall nature reserve in a campaign against anti-social behaviour.

Shoe camera pervert looked up skirts

A MAN caught with thousands of indecent images of children on his computer also secretly filmed up the skirts of women using a camera attached to his shoe.

Police raided the house of Davin Taylor while he was on holiday with his partner on September 11 last year and seized a number of computers and electronic devices.

When the 44-year-old returned the next day and was questioned by police, he admitted they would find images of children on his computer.

Mr Marcus Henry, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court that Taylor 'obtained a thrill out of downloading the images' and some of the items involved children as young as three.

Officers found thousands of images, including some that appeared to have been filmed secretly.

Mr Henry said: "In fact there were a number of images and videos whereby the defendant had attached a covert camera to his shoe and had used it to film up the skirts of women."

This took place between May 2011 and May 2012, and Taylor pleaded guilty to two counts of covert filming at an earlier appearance.

He had also pleaded guilty to three counts of possession of indecent still images of children, three counts of possession of indecent moving images and two counts of possession of extreme pornographic images. The charges all related to the period between August 2012 and August 2014.

A total of 839 of the still images were the most serious Category A, while there were 675 Category B and 1,725 Category C. When it came to video, 83 were Category A, 36 Category B, and 89 Category C.

Mr Stephen Hamblett, mitigating, said Taylor, of Halesowen Street, Rowley Regis, had expressed genuine remorse for what he had done.

Judge Mark Eades said: "A moment's thought would have made you realise to produce those images children had to be abused."

He sentenced Taylor to a three-year community rehabilitation programme, five years on a sex offender treatment programme and a sexual harm prevention order. Hemust not have contact with females under the age of 16.

Eight years in prison for iron bar beating

A MAN who viciously attacked two other men with an iron bar has been jailed for eight years.

Sam Branigan, who was with his parents, forced his way into the home of David Smith who he suspected of throwing a brick through his window earlier.

Mr Smith, aged 24, and a friend were hit over the head with an iron bar. Both victims suffered severe cuts.

At Wolverhampton Crown Court, Branigan was given two eight-year prison terms to run concurrently. He had previously been convicted of two counts of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm following a trial.

At a hearing in August his parents Lee Branigan, aged 47, of Springfield Lane, Rowley Regis and Angela Branigan, 41, of Newhall Street, West Bromwich, were jailed for five years and three years respectively for their role in the attack.

The court was told Sam Branigan was sitting in the back room of his house in Denby Drive, Hately Heath, when a brick was thrown through a front window on December 29. He believed Mr Smith was responsible but Judge Martin Walsh said there was no evidence that had been the case.

Later the same night Angela Branigan drove her husband and son to Mr Smith's home.

Mr Stephen Bailey, defending, said his client had gone to the house to 'talk things through' but then snapped.

Trigger

He said: "The trigger for Sam Branigan's involvement was a campaign by somebody he believes to be one or more of the people involved in this case, of a brick being thrown through his window and general intimidation and aggression. What he does say is that he did not intend to go round and immediately assault these men. Having got to the house he lost control."

Mr Bailey said his client, who had been a labourer and window fitter, had been growing increasingly upset by attempts to intimidate him as his partner was six weeks away from giving birth.

He added that the family had a history of acting violently together.

"One thing that could be said about the Branigan family is that they are very close," he said. "There is a history of the family coming together and acting violently in support of each other."

Pub's blooming marvellous result



Verity Campbell and Chris O'Gorman, from Wednesbury Garden Services, with landlady Vicki Devine

IT'S drinks all round at a Rowley Regis pub which is celebrating a gold award in the Heart of England In Bloom competition.

From colourful hanging baskets to beer barrels filled with begonias – The Britannia has been a pretty sight for its customers.

Gardener Chris O'Gorman secretly entered the pub in the prestigious competition and landlady Vicki Devine was surprised by a phone call about their success.

Mrs Devine, who has worked at the pub for four and a half years, said: "We actually didn't know we had won anything until someone phoned up, it was our gardener who decided to enter us in the first place, as we'd had so many great comments about the front of the pub."

"One lady wrote us a letter to say that seeing the flowers everyday had made her drive to work so much better."

"We are a real community-based pub so we hoped that the displays would make us more family friendly too. To win the award has been a lovely bonus and it's something we definitely want to enter again next year."

The Halesowen Street pub has more than 30 hanging baskets, troughs and two barrels filled with begonias. The beer garden was also decorated with bay trees and a fountain.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Textile artist to talk on geology

A RETIRED Halesowen College lecturer will be giving a talk on geology in textile art.

Georgia Jacobs, who taught geography and geology, will be speaking at Severn Valley Country Park at Alveley, near Bridgnorth, on October 15 from 7.30pm. Centre manager Susie Comisia said: "The country park is the perfect setting for this talk. The Severn Valley was carved out during the last Ice Age and is filled with distinctive geological features."

Tickets are £3 adults and £2 children. Book on 01746 781192.

New homes given officers' backing

PLANS for more than 100 homes on the site of a former high school in Rowley Regis have been backed.

Redrow has revealed proposals for the site of St Michael's CE High School in Thorne Road. Sandwell Council officers are recommending the scheme is approved at a meeting this week. The buildings have been empty since 2011 when the school moved.

The developer wants to build an estate of 124 properties. Since the school, also known as St Michael's Business Enterprise College, closed it has been targeted by vandals.

Conference on services for elderly

OLDER residents in Dudley are invited to attend the annual conference to find out more about services available in the borough.

It will take place at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on October 1. The conference will run from 9.30am until 3.30pm.

Refreshments, including lunch, will be provided and travel costs will be reimbursed for any older person attending. To register contact Michelle Raan at Age UK Dudley on (01384) 354508.

Cycle route earmarked for dual-carriageway

A £130,000 cycle route is to be created along a busy main road to stop people riding bikes on the narrow pavement.

Sandwell Council is set to agree the scheme for the A4123 New Birmingham Road, Tividale, at a meeting next week. A section of grass verge between Hill Road and Lower City Road will be converted into the new cycle route under the plans. Officers say as the New Birmingham Road is a 40mph dual-carriageway currently cyclists feel safer using the footpath.

Crackdown on crime

A SIX-WEEK crackdown on crime and anti-social behaviour in Sandwell will be launched at the end of the month.

The Safer 6 campaign aims to cut crime in the borough as the nights draw in.

Police will step up patrols and there will also be rogue trader crackdowns.



THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



THE big news on the front pages and trumpeted by TV and radio is that Facebook is to launch a "dislike" button. The small and rather neglected news is that North Korea has fired up its nuclear programme to make bigger and better hydrogen bombs. Interesting priorities.

HOW phobias work. Those of us with a yabba-dabba relationship with spiders will take no comfort at all in this week's news that a British firm has perfected the spider-proof garden shed. The idea is that no spider can get into the silicone-sealed garden hut. Or to put it another way, if a spider enters by the door which is then closed, it has no escape. It's just you and the spider, locked together, sealed together, mutually terrified. My own shed is well provided with chinks, gaps, knot-holes and other escape routes. At this time of year as I enter, there is a sudden scurry of small things exiting.



I AM often wrong in my political forecasts but I would not write off Jeremy Corbyn too soon. While the Westminster elite have been guffawing at his unpolished speeches or tut-tutting at his refusal to sing the National Anthem, 30,000 new members have joined the Labour Party. The more the Fleet Street pack snap at his heels and the more that smart-arse TV pundits scoff at him, the more the Great British Public sees Corbyn as a bullied hero and suspect there is an Establishment plot against him.

AND tell me, how is an avowed republican like Corbyn supposed to sing the line: "Long to reign over us"? Sing and you're a hypocrite. Don't sing and you're a traitor.

THE total debt on this planet is now almost three times the planet's annual output. Every man, woman and child owes, on average, about £20,000. The sums are way beyond boggling. As one wag asked on the radio a few days ago: "Who are we borrowing from - Mars?"

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Borough's jobless total shrinks by a quarter

UNEMPLOYMENT has plummeted across Dudley over the last year, official figures have revealed, with hundreds of people getting back into work.

Job queues have shrunk by nearly a quarter with the borough boosted by new jobs at firms including Ultimate Outdoors which created 80 positions at its Merry Hill store.

More jobs are on the way, including at Aldi which is set to recruit a total of 80 people for two new stores in Dudley and Stourbridge.

The number of people in Dudley claiming unemployment benefits, such as Jobseeker's Allowance, has fallen by 1,479 over 12 months to 5,169 last month.

Labour MP for Dudley North Ian Austin said: "I celebrate every new job in the area but long-term youth unemployment in the Black Country remains three times the national average, which is why we need to make education and skills our number one priority."

"The only way we will attract new investment to replace the jobs we've lost is by having the skills that new industries need."

The West Midlands' unemployment fall, down 21,000 compared to the previous three months, was in sharp contrast to the rest of the country where the overall UK jobless total rose by 10,000 to 1.8 million. That is due to higher jobless rates in London, the South East and the North East.

Encouraged

Dudley South Conservative MP Mike Wood said he was encouraged by the falling figures and claimed further support is on the way.

"Our top priority has been a sustainable economy that in turn means more people in work," he said.

"It is the Government's work programmes that are

by Simon Penfold

giving the support that people need. August trends are for figures to slightly rise with people leaving school or college but there is more and more training available year on year."

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Last Tango in Birmingham



Passionate — Vincent Simone and Flavia Cacace

STRICTLY Come Dancing favourites, Vincent Simone and Flavia Cacace certainly intend to go out in style with their last touring theatre show, The Last Tango, currently stunning audiences at the Birmingham Hippodrome.

After a glittering 20 years together, the world dance champions are presenting a final theatrical showcase of their incredible skills, in what surely has to be their most emotional and passionate production to date, as part of a 33 week tour.

Don't worry. The couple are not completely calling it a day but simply moving on to new projects.

Telling a story through dance is not always easy but this talented company, who boast some of the best dancers in the world, achieve it with ease.

The beautiful Flavia Cacace awards her fans with an extraordinary performance, while Vincent Simone is the perfect partner, offering his very own mixture of intensity and roguish personality. It is easy to see why they are the most formidable partnership in ballroom dancing.

Runs until Saturday.

Alison Norton

New music project hits the right note

A MUSIC institute is to be created at Brierley Hill's Waterfront complex under ambitious plans to bring hundreds of students to the town.

Dudley Council has announced it is working with the Birmingham Institute of Contemporary Music and Production on the project.

If approved, the scheme will bring 600 students to the town to study degrees and other qualifications in music, production, education, composition and music management.

New facilities will also be created including rehearsal rooms, recording studios, a shop, technology labs, classrooms and a lecture theatre.

It will also play a major role in organising music festivals across the borough.

Regeneration

Council officials said the project would be a key part of the regeneration proposals for the Waterfront after the council set up a Business Investment Zone to revive the area. But the project was still in its early stages.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "This is a major opportunity for us and shows that Dudley borough is a key destination for nationally renowned organisations. The new music institute will create a state-of-the-art venue for some of the country's top music students."

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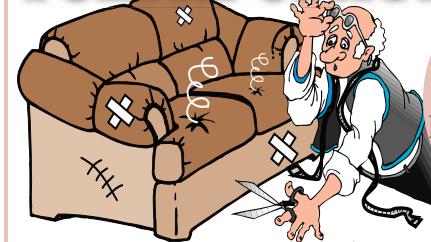
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A Defiant on display in St Peter's gardens, in Wolverhampton, just after the war



No 264 Squadron Defiants seen on patrol during the Battle of Britain



Volunteer Harry Stant, next to the heritage centre's Defiant cockpit



Wing Cdr Deanesly and gunner Sgt Scott, with their Defiant



Top scoring Defiant crew Edward Thorn and Fred Barker

Flying back to recall bravery of The Few

IT IS the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, the last major anniversary when many of those brave Few who fought in the Battle are still with us.

Wolverhampton's highest profile contribution to the battle was the Boulton Paul Defiant fighter, built at Pendeford. Two squadrons of Defiants, No.141 and No.264, fought alongside the more numerous Spitfires and Hurricanes during the Battle, with dogfights taking place in the skies until late October, 1940.

Indeed it was a Defiant which shot down the Dornier bomber that was so publicly raised from the sea bed off the Kent coast over two years ago, and which is now under long-term restoration at the RAF Museum, in Cosford.

On Battle of Britain Day, Sunday September 20, the Tettishall Transport Heritage Centre unveiled their new display about the Defiant, and raffled a unique framed photograph of a Defiant on test flight from Pendeford.

The photograph is signed by five former Defiant airmen who fought in the Battle – pilots Eric Barwell and John Lauder, along with air

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

gunners Fred Gash and Fred Barker, the latter, becoming the highest scoring Defiant gunner, with 13 victories to his name.

It is possible therefore Fred might be the highest scoring air gunner of all time.

The fifth signatory, pilot Christopher Deanesly has very special Wolverhampton connections. Not only was he born in Wolverhampton in January 1910, his father Edward Deanesly was an eminent surgeon at the Royal Hospital, and the Deanesly Cancer Centre at New Cross is named after him.

Crashed

Christopher Deanesly flew Spitfires during the Battle in 152 Squadron, but after recuperating from being shot down over the Channel was posted to No.256 Squadron flying Defiants.

During the Blitz, he and his gunner, New Zealander, Sgt W Scott, shot down four German bombers, including a Heinkel which crashed in Smethwick. The volunteers at the Heritage Centre are rebuilding the cockpit of a Defiant and proceeds from the raffle will assist with that.



Thorn and Barker with their 264 Sqd Defiant, showing its wheels

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A cultured approach to living a proper life

ARE you cultured? I've always liked to believe I am. I've got the full box-set of The Sweeney on DVD, I always insist on Tesco Classic coffee, and would never dream of asking for lager in a pub. In other words, I'm a discerning man about town who appreciates the finer things in life. Well, Black Country life, anyway.

A new survey reveals a list of 40 things which determine how cultured we are, and for many people it will make mixed reading.

For instance I do have a library card, which is one of the attributes. I read a newspaper every day – well several actually – and don't turn the news off when it comes on television. So far, so good then. But then it gets more difficult. For example, you're probably unlikely to find me in an art gallery – I don't know much about art, but I do know what I like. And it sure isn't the kind of guff you'll get in the Tate Modern.

Watching subtitled films is supposed to be another sign of being a well-rounded individual, but surely if you're that smart you'll be fluent in a different language anyway, and the subtitles will be superfluous. Unless you're watching Taggart, of course. Knowing about different cuts of meat is also cited, and I can tell the difference between KVE Original and pork crunch.

The survey also suggested that a truly cultured person would always want to read a book before watching the film adaptation. I totally agree, but I've never been able to track down the novel to *Murder On The Buses*. ■ ■ ■

The Queen's record-breaking reign has brought the usual dreary protests out from the drab republicans, moaning that there is nothing democratic about an hereditary monarchy. But I suspect if there were a referendum tomorrow, more people would vote for keeping the Queen than replacing her with a boring middle-aged man in a suit.

And if that happened, would those committed democrats respect the will of the people that voted in the referendum? Of course they would. Just like the Scottish Nationalists did. ■ ■ ■

THE end L.S. nigh, screamed the headline. "The defeat of Islamic State is inevitable after nearly half its fighters were wiped out." Some days I really wish I could believe everything I read in The Sun. ■ ■ ■

THE English Bridge Union is now trying to get sitting around playing cards as a sport. And quite right too. Let's just make sure they include pontoon and rummy. And snap, of course. Then I can say I'm not only cultured, but also a sportsman. I never knew my life was so complete.

Tony's engineering expertise helps with each guitar's creation

Accomplished player Sam tunes up one of the latest instruments

Some of the amazing range of instruments made by the Wrights

Strum-thing special for a father and son

SIMON PENFOLD meets a family duo who are hoping to make it in the music world with their carefully crafted guitars

IT has been a long, tough and sometimes heartbreaking journey, but engineer Tony Wright says he is now 'living the dream' – working alongside his youngest son, crafting hand-made guitars in a small workshop in Wolverhampton.

Like most teenagers, Tony picked up a guitar. But unlike most he kept on playing and eventually learned electric bass.

Now, 43 years on, he and son Sam are launching their own business, Lakestone Guitars, and rapidly building a strong reputation for the quality of their work and the beautiful tones produced by their guitars.

Father and son say they have been supported by their strong Christian faith and by their love for their craft as luthiers – a term dating back to the original lute makers of the 15th and 16th centuries. Their current profession is a million miles from where Tony started, training as an apprentice fitter with Robinson Brothers in West Bromwich in 1972.

Redesigning

His engineering career went from strength to strength. Working for an engineering consultancy in Wolverhampton he found himself redesigning the machine at the Cadbury factory at Bournville that makes the Curly Wurly.

"That was in 1982, and as far as I know it's still working today," said Tony, who lives in Gornal.

After completing a two-year degree course at the former Wolverhampton Polytechnic, Tony switched to working in education, and was rapidly head-hunted as design lecturer at Dudley College and then appointed as head of department. Meanwhile, he had taught himself to make electric guitars. "I had been asked to play with a group of musicians who were professionals or semi-pro, and I decided I needed something better than my old Squier bass. I bought one in Birmingham but didn't like the tone, and when I took it back I saw



Sam Wright, aged 25, and his father Tony, 59, are making guitars together in Wolverhampton

one hanging on the shop wall that used to be owned by Mark King, from Level 42. It sounded fantastic, but I looked at the price and it was £3,500 – a lot of money in the 1980s. So it went back on the wall.

"I thought, I'm a design engineer, I can learn how to make one. I did it in my spare time, lunch hours in the college workshop."

But in 1989 Tony suffered a massive heart attack. He tried to return to work but the stress was too great and he had to take early retirement. He carried on with the guitar making and repairs in his garden shed, and also worked part-time as a pastor at his church. His guitars, meanwhile, were building a small but appreciative audience among skilled players.

Then, eight years ago, his wife of 30 years died from cancer. "Our faith helped get us through, but I just didn't want to make guitars any more," said Tony. Sam, the youngest son and talented musician in his own right, was also struggling. "There were days he just didn't want to get out of bed," said Tony. "He had made his first guitar at 13 or 14, so I said

let's go and make guitars. I started making acoustics because it was something new for me, we could learn together."

Learning to make acoustic guitars well can take decades, but the Wrights had a stroke of luck. Tony had invented a device called a universal fret slotted that could accurately fit the frets on guitar necks to within one 4,000th of an inch. They have been sold globally and led to a call from world-renowned guitar maker George Lowden. Working on a series of projects at Lowden's factory in Northern Ireland resulted in a masterclass for Tony in the skills and intricacies of making acoustic guitars.

He's passed these skills on to Sam and to his musician friend Dan Clark, who offered the duo his garage in Wolverhampton as their workshop as the business outgrew the shed in Gornal. After months of work, which included turning the garage into a temperature and humidity-controlled environment, father and son are launching Lakestone Guitars – hoping to make at least two guitars a month. Currently, each guitar is the result of around 200 hours of work, although they are hoping to bring

that down in their new workshop. Each one is handmade for the client, usually from rosewood but also from walnut, mahogany, spruce, cedar and rarer timbers such as lacewood from plane trees, or even Adirondack spruce. "That can cost £200 just for enough to make the face of the guitar's body, but it produces a lovely tone," Tony adds.

A dense African hardwood called wenge is sometimes used for fingerboards, but the Wrights are sticklers for ebony on acoustic guitar fretboards. The use of different woods is crucial in the distinct sound each guitar will produce, with bodies made of cedar, for example, producing a warmer sound.

Even on electric guitars, the wood makes a big difference. Maple, used for Fender-style guitars, will produce a brasher sound, while the mahogany used for a Gibson style instrument will offer a warmer tone.

Thinner

Alongside a craftsman's knowledge of his materials, Tony brings 21st century engineering nous. He likes making guitars with thinner necks and has come up with a way of using carbon fibre to strengthen them. He is also making guitars with a distinctive fan fret, like his mentor George Lowden. It improves the sound and is easier to play. The company name, Lakestone, comes from the old stone quarry near Tony's original shed in Gornal.

Depending on the woods used, a Lakestone Guitar will be priced at around £2,500. Tony said: "The business hasn't made a penny yet but I hope it will provide a living for Sam and I, particularly for Sam. I am 59, so I'll have my pension soon, but Sam is only 25. I want this to be a long-running business."

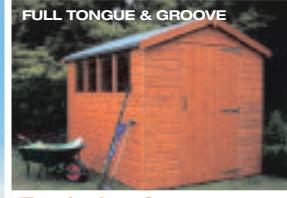
Alongside a business they love, father and son have also had some much-deserved happiness in their home lives.

Sam has married – with his pastor father conducting the service – and Tony too has remarried, bringing home a Canadian bride Lonnie after meeting online – "She says she got me cheap on eBay," he jokes.

"She comes from British Columbia, and after we were married her sister came across a batch of rare woods being sold, bought them and sent them to me. What a great sister-in-law is that! I couldn't believe it when I opened the parcel. It was stuff you just can't get over here." For details visit www.lakestoneguitars.co.uk

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At least Corbyn offers alternative

LIKE him or loathe him, one thing is certain is that a Labour Party led by Jeremy Corbyn is, at last, going to offer some sort of opposition to this Tory Government and will also provide an alternative to the Tory policies we have had to endure (no matter who was in power) ever since Tony Blair became leader.

For far too long the Labour Party has just been a mere shadow of the Conservative Party and the leadership seem to have forgotten their roots. It does not seem to have occurred to them that Tory policies are

Tory policies, irrespective of whether they are being carried out by the Conservatives or the Labour Party.

Perhaps, in Jeremy Corbyn, we now have a Labour leader who, although not perfect, at least realises that there just may be an alternative to the policies followed by the Governments of the last 18 years or more.

Any MPs who find it impossible to remain within the Labour Party should do the honourable thing.

C JONES

Brierley Hill

Reasons for the lack of lorry drivers

RE: the shortage of LGV drivers. It's not just low pay scales to blame.

There are also other reasons such as impossible schedules, road congestion, satellite tracking, drivers' rules, lack of overnight parking facilities, diesel theft, cost of getting qualified, and the new CPC which all drivers have to do every five years.

There is no safe designated lorry park in the Black Country. Drivers deserve a good night's sleep, not having to worry about any thieving. To park up on Motorway Services costs £20 or more, some hauliers forbid using them.

Any accident the police always check tacho evidence. It's the only job where you can go to jail for working too hard.

It is a skilled job/lifestyle and when delays occur may mean not getting home at night. It is not appealing as a career anymore, which is why there is a shortage.

Just a few things LGV drivers have to put up with.

P WINCHURCH
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Wow, what a waste at New Street Station

WOW, am I mad!

Two weeks ago, our weird, irresponsible, right wing Establishment opened 49km of a mainly single track, rural railway line in depopulated southern Scotland.

Who had heard of Tweedbank?

Next, not a new New Street Station but a new shopping centre.

Out with the Pallasades and in with Grand Central while the underground platforms are tagged along as an afterthought in the basement of John Lewis. They remain dim, dingy and diesel perfumed.

Train congestion and delays are as bad as ever.

The £750m (spent on New Street) could have been put towards building the much-needed additional tunnels at the western and eastern approaches.

Or, the £750m could have been used to restore the passenger trains and stations to the 75km of double track freight lines in the Black Country and Brum that are literally alongside, or near to the traffic choked roads.

Next fanfare will be for the very short — but still extravagant in an age of austerity — £100 million for a mile tram extension from Snow Hill to Grand Central, as we continue to struggle to get around on our crowded roads and railways.

They have made themselves homeless and have homes in Syria so this disqualifies them from being re-housed. That's what they told me and I have lived in Dudley for 63 years.

M PARKES
Brierley Hill

Stick to rules on refugees

I WOULD just like to remind Dudley Council that according to their rules none of these refugees qualify for council accommodation.

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Or, the £750m could have been used to restore the passenger trains and stations to the 75km of double track freight lines in the Black Country and Brum that are literally alongside, or near to the traffic choked roads.

Next fanfare will be for the very short — but still extravagant in an age of austerity — £100 million for a mile tram extension from Snow Hill to Grand Central, as we continue to struggle to get around on our crowded roads and railways.

They have made themselves homeless and have homes in Syria so this disqualifies them from being re-housed. That's what they told me and I have lived in Dudley for 63 years.

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P WINCHURCH
Dudley

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Formidable fraulein is no joke for Jonny



Not laughing now — Black Country comic Jonny Cole discovers his female opponent really means business

BLACK Country comedian Jonny Cole admits he was left 'battered, bruised and squashed' after his charity tussle with a female wrestling champion ended in defeat.

The Wednesbury funnyman took on fearsome German grappler Alpha Female at the Copthorne Hotel in Dudley to raise funds for Women's Aid.

Stand-up comic Cole became a 'lie-down' comedian, spending the majority of the short bout sprawled on the floor, his face a picture of anguish.

In one painful looking move Alpha Female, aka Marie Kristin Gabbert, hurled Cole face down onto the

mat before pulling him legs akimbo straight into the corner post. The manoeuvre caused Cole's trademark flat cap — which he had refused to remove — to come flying off his head.

"If it hadn't been for the padding I'd have been in serious trouble there," Cole said the day after the event. "I'm still sore after all that gambolling but it was a good laugh and I have to give credit to Alpha Female for trying her best to make me look like I knew what I was doing!"

A crowd of more than 200 saw the action, helping to raise around £3,000 for the charity.

Before the bout the formidable fraulein ramped up the tension by saying: "He hasn't taken his preparations seriously. For that he will pay."

Cole had announced that he was confident of 'putting on a decent show', although his bravado had completely vanished by the time he was in his Lycra bodysuit and prepared to enter the ring draped in the Black Country flag. "When it was time to step into the ring I knew I was in trouble," he added.

The night also featured comedy from Cole, music from The Ronaldos and a three-versus-three wrestling.

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Watson role filled if Hollywood calls

DANIEL WAINWRIGHT

Political Editor

FOR years the European Union was the millstone around the Tories' necks. Last week it turned into Labour's.

Within hours of Jeremy Corbyn becoming the party's leader and by a landslide majority, Wolverhampton North East MP Emma Reynolds joined an exodus of front benchers.

Chief among her concerns was that Mr Corbyn had been highly critical of the EU and might not only fail to campaign to stay in, he might even have wanted to join the side of 'out'.

She was not alone. Former shadow business secretary Chuka Umunna said: "It is my view that we should support the UK remaining a member of the EU, notwithstanding the outcome of any renegotiation by the Prime Minister, and I cannot envisage any circumstances where I would be campaigning alongside those who would argue for us to leave – Jeremy has made it clear to me that he does wholeheartedly share this view."

Five days passed and another Wolverhampton MP, the south east's Pat McFadden, still did not know his future. As shadow Europe minister his role, while not in the shadow cabinet, was surely essential.

But it was Thursday night before he was given the news he wanted to hear – Jeremy Corbyn would campaign to stay in the EU. The crucial reassurance for pro-Europe Mr McFadden was that it was not just a passive promise not to campaign to leave,



Deputy Labour leader Tom Watson



Shaun of the Dead star Nick Frost

but an active one to fight to stay in. If Mr Corbyn could give such assurances to Mr McFadden, then why not to Mr Umunna?

He had said on Wednesday night that Labour's policy on Europe was "developing". By Thursday it was well and truly formed.

With the party now trying to pull itself back together as the dust settles after a long and drawn out leadership contest, the last thing it wants is its own equivalent of the Maastricht rebellion that split the Tories.

After all, it's not as though the Parliamentary Labour Party are short of things to disagree with Jeremy Corbyn on. Some are less than happy with his own record of supporting Labour. He has rebelled against his own party 533 times in his 32 years.

That means he has voted against

Labour more times than David Cameron, who has been in the Commons since 2001. One Labour MP said: "Jeremy Corbyn never paid very much attention to previous leaders' whips so I don't think I'll be too bothered about his." Then the MP saw the positive side and added: "Which means I might get home a bit earlier."

If Hollywood is ever looking to make a movie about the current British Labour party – no, I don't think it's likely either – they will be looking to cast someone as West Bromwich MP and new deputy leader Tom Watson. They need look no further than Nick Frost, star of films such as Shaun of the Dead. The pair are almost dead ringers for each other, so much so Frost tweeted: "I want to thank everyone who supported me and I'm thrilled at my election."

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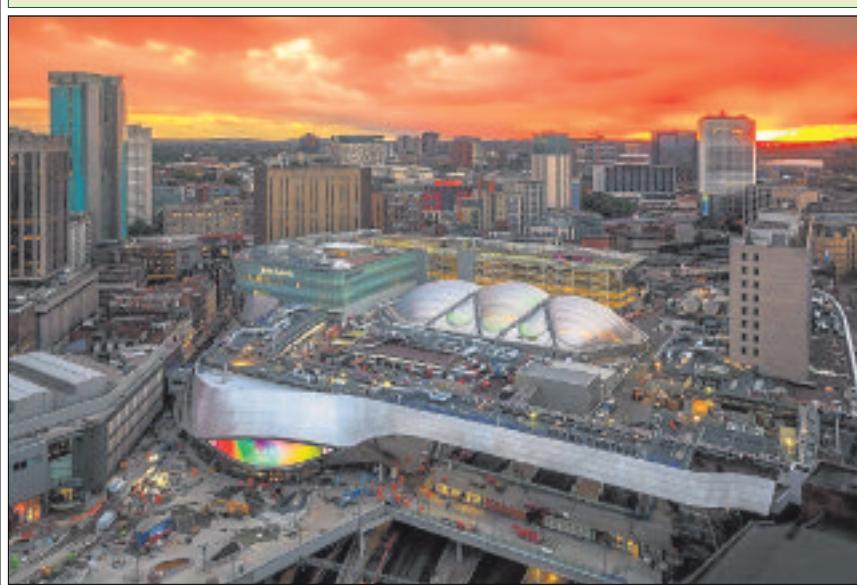
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Grand Central and New Street Station now dominates Birmingham city centre with its stunning glass atrium, major new John Lewis store and 'media eye' hi-tech advertising hoardings

Photograph courtesy of Verity E. Milligan

A SHOPPING complex rivalling the best London has to offer, with streams of light pouring in through a huge glass ceiling - welcome to Grand Central in Birmingham.

The £600 million transformation of New Street Station was unveiled at the weekend and now shoppers can flock to Grand Central and its sprawling John Lewis store.

Some 50 million of them are expected in the first year alone, as the city heads into a new era.

For years visitors to Birmingham have been confronted by the dark concrete expanse of the old station, head-

ing up escalators only to face a walk through the dated Pallades centre. But bosses hope the £150m Grand Central and the new station will give visitors from across the country a positive impression that will keep them coming back.

New Street was originally known as Grand Central when it opened in 1854 and the new shopping complex is spread across four floors and 250,000sqft.

John Lewis alone will have £30m of stock ranging from fashion and home-wares to technology.

When the long-awaited plans for

New Street finally got off the ground, civic leaders wanted to make sure they did not waste the opportunity to transform the city.

So they decided to make it much more than just a train station and instead create a shopping destination in its own right, to complement the hugely successful Bullring.

John Lewis - one of the biggest in the country - may be the 'anchor' store but there is plenty more to explore. More than 60 shops and restaurants are spread across 500,000 sq ft, ranging from Carluccio's and Costa Coffee to Nando's and wine bar Frizzenti.

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Brave son inspires father's run

A FATHER from Cradley Heath is gearing up to run the Great Birmingham Half-Marathon after being inspired by his son who suffers from a rare disease.

Adam South's three-year-old son, Jack, contracted Kawasaki's Disease at eight months old.

He was one of the first children to be diagnosed with the disease at Russells Hall Hospital. The condition causes inflammation in arteries.

Mr South, 31, from Waterfall Lane, will be running the marathon for Birmingham charity Young at Heart on October 18, which supports families of children with heart defects.

Mr South, a teacher at Hurst Green Primary School said: "Young at Heart are amazing to us."

See his appeal page at www.justgiving.com/Adam-South2

Sally Army's brass bands

THE West Midlands Fellowship Band will be performing in Cradley Heath.

They will be joined by the Shirley Band, from Solihull, who are competing in the brass band championship next year.

The event will take place at the Salvation Army Church, in Meredith Street, on Friday, October 2. Refreshments will be available. Call (01384) 563 570 or visit website www.salvationarmy.org.uk/cradley-heath/church

FOCUS ON CRADLEY AND CRADLEY HEATH

Pub supporters launch new bid to protect their local

MORE than 250 people have signed a petition against fresh plans to build a store on a pub car park in Cradley Heath.

Sandwell Council has already thrown out one scheme put forward by New River Retail for the Haden Cross site on Halesowen Road. The pub was also granted Asset of Community Value status.

But the firm has submitted fresh proposals, saying it has addressed issues raised by councillors.

The Friends of Haden Cross group has collected more than 250 signatures in two weeks for a petition which will be submitted to the council after Sunday.

The group hopes to hold a public meeting on October 13 at the Haden Cross from 7.30pm. It is expected that the planning application may be decided by councillors on October 21.

Group chairman Tim Haskey said: "Our current petition against this revised application is going exceptionally well with over 250 signatures raised in under two weeks since launch. We are closing this petition on Sunday, to compile the final count before it will be handed to Sandwell Council by our local councillor, Ann Shackleton. We are led to believe that if this revised application goes to committee, this will possibly be held on October 21. Thus our

by Heather Large

next public meeting to plan action is pencilled in to take place on October 13."

Regulars at the Haden Cross thought that they had successfully stopped developers when an application was rejected by Sandwell Council in January.

Mr Haskey said that they had thought they had shaken developers off when the pub was granted Asset of Community Value status by the council but the new proposal had left them feeling downhearted.

The developer says the number of parking spaces has been increased from 13 to 25, while the height of the roof's store will now be below that of the pub.

Mr Haskey added: Mr Haskey said: "New River has proposed more spaces for the pub now but that is still a loss of the 16 spaces and our beer garden."



Morgan Siviter is campaigning for a former key Cradley Heath shop to be replaced

A bumper harvest is zoo feast

A green-fingered couple from Cradley Heath have supplied animals at Dudley Zoo with a gift of their harvest surplus of marrows, swede, cabbages and pumpkins.

John and Shirley Jordan delivered the pile of produce to the zoo in Castle Hill after they had a bumper harvest on their allotment.

Mr Jordan, who has a plot at Cherry Orchard allotments near his home, said: "There's too much here for us and it's a real pleasure to give it to the zoo as we love animals."

The 20 cabbages, two pumpkins, a dozen marrows and several swedes have been shared out across the site. Head of lower primates Nicola Wright said: "Chimps have enjoyed eating the flesh of the pumpkin and we are drying out the seeds to give to our saki monkeys."

School hosts open days

ORMISTON Forge Academy in Cradley Heath will be holding two open days this week for youngsters who are due to start secondary school in 2016.

Prospective students and their parents are invited to the school in Wrights Lane today (Thu) and on Saturday. Visitors can try science experiments, eat food prepared by students and meet the academy's principal, Andrew Burns. Doors are open from 6 to 8.30pm today, 9-noon Saturday.

Morgan, who lives in nearby Netherton, is gathering support for his bid to find a tenant for the store. He is planning a meeting with Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris over the coming weeks to discuss the issue. Morgan, who attends Earls High School in Halesowen, already has the backing of local councillors.

"This is the biggest store left empty on the high street. It's a shame to see it shut. I am confident something can be done," said the determined youngster.



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Traders ensure town is blooming

ADVERTISING FEATURE

HALESOWEN is one of the most thriving town centres in the Black Country, says Chairman of Halesowen Chamber of Trade, Wayne Edwards.

The town has the benefit of a progressive Chamber of Trade which, with the support of the traders and local organisations, is achieving remarkable results in introducing innovative ideas and activities to attract even more shoppers and visitors.

Recently agreed with Dudley Council and shortly to be introduced is the provision of 35 additional free parking places, providing 45 minutes of short-term parking to those needing to make only a short visit to the town centre.

The Chamber is currently also in negotiation with Dudley Council to test the viability of a Business Improvement District (see page 3), otherwise known as a BID, for the town centre. This gives power to the town centre traders to introduce and finance improvements to the trading, shopping and business environment.

Attractive

This includes cleaner, safer streets by day and by night, even more attractive displays, encouragement of new businesses and helping those new businesses to become established on a long term basis, plus much more.

New or improved events have been introduced to the town such as the Christmas Lights switch-on event, which last year attracted 43,000 visitors.



Eve O'Connor, front, with Amanda Hodgetts and Steve Fitzpatrick

itors in one day to the town centre. In co-operation with Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club, the Black Country Road Race and Fun Run and the Black Country Fayre both brought substantial numbers of visitors.

There are moves to smarten up Grange Island, the principal entrance to the town, with the erection of a statue which will be symbolic of Halesowen's illustrious history and greatly enhance the perception of a thriving town for the many visitors.

Halesowen can be proud that it has achieved a gold award for its Halesowen

en In Bloom entry in the national competition at only the second attempt, having achieved the silver gilt award last year. This has been achieved through the efforts of Eve O'Connor chairperson for Halesowen in Bloom. The results of these efforts can still be seen in the many floral displays.

Thanks to work by the Chamber, Halesowen now has its own website which with links from other websites now offers an opportunity to see all that Halesowen has to offer and things to come. Go to www.halesowentowncentre.co.uk

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A friendly welcome at Jo's Baguette Bar in the The Cornbow shopping centre, Halesowen

Shop locally for a better experience

AS the days get shorter and there is a chilly nip in the air, why travel far and wide for your shopping when you can find everything you need right on your doorstep in Halesowen Town Centre?

From household names such as Clarks, New Look, Peacocks, Argos, Thorntons and Asda to independents such as Russell's Fruits, Hewitt's Butchers and the promotional stands, town centre shoppers are spoilt for choice in Halesowen.

There is even a Farmer's Market on the second and fourth Saturday of every month from 9am to 5pm where you can brows e stalls selling home-made and home-grown food and crafts in the Somers Square.

There is also a range of national and independent food outlets such as Greggs, Coffee Worx, Drucker's and Jo's Baguette Bar.

Shopping locally can certainly save you money, as goods

ADVERTISING FEATURE

and services can often be cheaper as walking or convenient public transport links with a state-of-the-art bus station means you may not need to factor in fuel costs.

But if you choose to drive, there are free parking spaces on Queensway as well as numerous short and long-term stay options. In the Asda car park you can park for a maximum of three hours if you spend £5 or over in Asda, parking refunded at the checkout.

Having a great choice of independent shops is another benefit of town centre shopping but these small traders can only survive if we support them. So if you want a vibrant town centre, where people can socialise as well as shop, shop locally.

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Early Stages

Performance meets play in our fun 90-minute sessions for 4 to 6 year-olds. Our classes are divided into three 30-minute bursts and are a great way to build confidence and new friendships. Weekly classes are held in term-time.

Main Stages

Our sessions for 6 to 18 year-olds let talent and self-esteem shine. Weekly 3-hour classes focus equally on dance, acting and singing. Always something to fire the imagination.

Further Stages

Advanced performers aged 15+ years really flourish in our weekly masterclasses. Lasting between 2 and 3 hours each, these in-depth sessions hone skills and help prepare students for exams and auditions.

For further details visit our website:
www.stagecoach.co.uk/halesowen
or Telephone: 0121 531 7430



Our Plaice

Traditional Fish and Chips Since 1968

Our Plaice Fish and Chip Shop is located on Dudley Road, Halesowen B63 3NJ and is living up to its reputation of serving the Finest Fish & Chips by far. The stylish detached bungalow

style shop standing in its own grounds with car parking for in excess of 40 cars is being run by 3rd generation Oliver Howard. The recent make over by Ollie is just the start of things to come for the

Family run shop, which has come a long way since its starting point back in 1968 when Ollie's Nan spotted an opportunity to fire up the frying range in the front room in Colley Gate in the

Black Country.

To this day Traditional Fish & Chips are delivered to Parties, Weddings and functions in our custom designed boxes and we will not be beaten on price.



Outside Our Plaice Fish and Chip shop with seating area



Manager Ollie serving up some more Award Winning Fish and Chips



We are pleased to say with our Grilled Fish Cod Red Snapper, Sea Bass etc and Jacket potatoes we achieved Gold award.

The List of awards we have won is long but not as long as the cue out the door on a busy tea time.



Another busy time at Our Plaice



GLUTEN FREE

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ITS ALWAYS SPECIAL at Our Plaice

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Small cod and chips only £2.99

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Sundays 5-9pm
Call or visit our website for further details

Wednesday & Thursday All Day Special
Large Haddock /Plaice and chips only £6.49

We now accept all major credit and debit cards



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B63 3NJ**

**Tel: 0121 550 0229
Web: www.ourplaice.biz**

fast theticket

Monster show

Shrek musical at The Grand

See Page 19



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MONSTER**

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For full listings see **Express & Star** every Friday

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31 Oct King Lion/Maria
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21 Nov Wicked/Carole King's Beautiful
28 Nov Phantom/Elf
5 Dec Mamma Mia

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6 Dec - Elvis 2 FOR 1 BAR! (t&c apply) **2 DAYS**
13 Dec - Freddie Mercury **£65**

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28 Nov, 5, 12 Dec 2 DAYS
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Madness



Friday, 9pm
Wolverhampton Racecourse
The London ska legends are odds-on favourites to give fans and race-goers a night to remember when they perform at Wolverhampton Racecourse after the day's racing has finished.
wolverhampton-racecourse.co.uk

Alan Carr



Sat, Sun, 8pm
Wolverhampton Civic Hall
Saturday's gig sold out ages ago and so Sunday was added as an extra. At the time of going to press a few tickets remained, but you'll need to be quick about it.
www.wolvescivic.co.uk

Maudits Sonnnts



Fri, Sat, 8.30pm
Centenary Square, B'ham
Maudit Sonnnts will fill Centenary Square with a large-scale bewitching orchestra of bell ringers and acrobats who are lifted skywards to perform a magical concert.
www.birminghamhippodrome.com

The Manfreds



Wednesday, 7pm
Stafford Gatehouse
The 60s group Manfred Mann is now considered one of the finest and most respected bands from the 60s. Their numerous pop hits were R&B based with an undercurrent of jazz.
www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk

POP & ROCK

Queen Tribute
Fri at 7.30pm, £22.40
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

Madness
Fri at 6pm, £35
Wolverhampton Racecourse, WV6 0PE. Call 01902 390000

Guns Vs Roses: Guns N Roses Tribute
Sat at 12am, £5 - £7
The Roadhouse Birmingham, Kings Norton, B30 3DZ. Call 0121 246 2273

Joe McElderry - The Evolution Tour 2015
Thu at 7.30pm, £20.50
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

The Manfreds
Wed at 7.30pm, £19.50 - £20.50
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

Reef
Sat at 8pm, £20
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Spunge
Sun at 5.30pm - 10.30pm, £10
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Joe Longthorne
Thu at 7.30pm, £22.50
Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE. Call 01543 578762

Big Country - Best Of Tour
Fri at 7.30pm, £20 - £22.50
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

The Lemonheads
Thu at 7pm, £17
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Wille And The Bandits
Thu at 7.30pm - 11pm, £10
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ. Call 0844 870 0000

The Killers: The Killers Tribute
Fri at 7.30pm, £8
The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN. Call 01384 397177

The Wombats
Fri at 7pm - 11pm, £17
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Dave Bainbridge
Wed at 7.30pm, £12 - £14
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

The Christians & Roachford

Sat at 7pm, £30.25
Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

Cliff Richard's 75th Birthday Tour
Tue at 7.45pm, £65 - £75
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Bravado: Rush Tribute
Sun at 7.30pm, £10 - £12
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Annihilator
Wed at 7pm - 11pm, £16
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Ben Khan
Mon at 7pm, £8
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

The Picturebooks
Thu at 7pm, £7
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

Sleaford Mods
Tue at 7pm, £15
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

The Mods
Sat at 7.30pm, £12 - £14
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Gun
Tue at 7pm, £14
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Hunter Hayes
Sun at 7pm, £16.50
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Simply Dylan
Fri at 6pm, £19.50
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

The Bluetones
Sat at 7pm, £21
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 2HS. Call 0121 622 8250

A Solitary Man - The Songs Of Neil Diamond
Fri at 7.30pm, £14
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

Luke Pickett
Sun at 7.30pm - 10pm, £6
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ. Call 0844 870 0000

Enslaved & Grand Magus
Fri at 7pm, £16
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

JAZZ & BLUES

Chantel McGregor

Thu at 7pm - 11pm, £13
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

The Big Chris Barber Band
Fri at 7.30pm - 10pm, £21
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

Jo Harman And Company
Thu at 7.30pm, £12.50 - £14.50
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Albert Lee
Mon at 7.30pm, £25
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

Gareth Lockrane's Grooveyard
Fri at 5pm, Free
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Sain Zahoor
Wed at 8.30pm, £15 - £20
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Martha Reeves & The Vandellas
Sun at 7pm, £20 - £22.50
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

The Soul Survivors
Sat at 7.30pm, £10
The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN. Call 01384 397177

The 39 Steps
Fri at 7.45pm, Sat at 7.45pm, £9 - £10
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

I Loved You And I Loved You (Over 12s)
Sat at 8pm, £8 - £10
mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH. Call 0121 446 3232

Rat Pack: Vegas Spectacular
Fri at 7.30pm, £20 - £21
Palace Theatre, Alcester Street, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

Birmingham Weekender: Berending Kumpo
Wed at 7.30pm - 10.30pm, £10
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ. Call 0844 870 0000

Irish Music Session
Wed at 8pm, Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB. Call 01384 374410

CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC
Corey Baker Dance: Haka Day Out
Fri at 8pm, £13
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

Dead Dog In A Suitcase (And Other Love Songs)
Tue at 7pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 2pm, 7.30pm, £13.50 - £35
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

Vincent And Flavia
Fri at 7.30pm - 10pm, Sat at 2.30pm - 5.30pm, 7.30pm - 10pm, £18.50 - £45
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

Michael McIntyre: Happy & Glorious
Fri at 8pm, Sat at 8pm, £35 - £50
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

Alan Carr: Yap, Yap, Yap!
Sat at 8pm, Sun at 8pm, £30
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

COMEDY

Michael McIntyre: Happy & Glorious
Fri at 8pm, Sat at 8pm, £35 - £50
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

Alan Carr: Yap, Yap, Yap!
Sat at 8pm, Sun at 8pm, £30
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Shrek is taking ogre at the Grand



Go green at the Grand — Bronté Barbé as Princess Fiona, Idriss Kargbo as Donkey and Dean Chisnall as Shrek. BE a believer in fairy tales when monster hit Shrek The Musical arrives at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre for 16 performances from Wednesday, September 30.

Starring Dean Chisnall, who also played the green ogre in the West End, the cast also includes Over The Rainbow finalist Bronté Barbé

as Princess Fiona, Idriss Kargbo as Shrek's wisecracking sidekick Donkey and Gerard Carey as pint-sized villain Lord Farquaad.

Based on the hugely popular animated movie, Shrek The Musical was seen live on stage in London by nearly a million people and helped Neil Diamond's 1960s hit for The Monkees, I'm A Believer, become popular all over again.

Also featuring a love-sick dragon,

a biscuit with attitude and a host of fairy tale favourites, the UK tour of Shrek The Musical is directed by Nigel Harman, who played Lord Farquaad at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

The show runs at the Grand until October 11, including matinee performances, and tickets range from £16.50 to £44.50.

See www.grandtheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01902 429 212.

From tears to cheers

WORLD-FAMOUS violin virtuoso Nicola Benedetti sobbed her way through her first violin lesson, aged four. But the 28-year-old from Ayrshire, who was born to a Scottish mother and Italian father, went on to become one of the most popular classical violinists of her generation.

"I cried through my first violin lesson," remembered Nicola. "I was quite shy and am also left-handed, so I continually picked the instrument up the wrong way. My teacher probably got frustrated and I was just so nervous."

"But from the second lesson on I got the hang of it and really progressed quite quickly. Actually, it was the music moving me to tears that hooked me to the violin."

At the age of eight she became leader of the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain and by nine had already passed the eight grades of music exams. At 16 she won the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition and had signed a £1 million six album deal. Since then she was won two Classical BRIT Awards for Best Female Artist and was awarded an MBE for services to classical music. One of her biggest motivations is encouraging children to take up music.

Last year's Homecoming album, inspired by Scottish music, entered the top 20 pop chart.

She returns to the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday with a dynamic programme inspired by her father's homeland. It will include Vivaldi's Four Seasons and Tchaikovsky's Souvenir de Florence. Tickets start at £20 for Saturday's concert, see www.tshs.co.uk or call 0121 345 0600.



'Moving me to tears hooked me to the violin'

Nostalgic string of rock and pop gigs

THERE'S a strong hint of nostalgia on the gig scene.

Scottish rockers Big Country, with Simon Hough taking over from the late Stuart Adamson on vocals, are at Bilston's Robin 2 tomorrow (Fri) and Liverpool's The Christians team up with Cuddly Toy rocker Andrew Roachford at the Wulfrun Hall on Saturday. That's the same night The Bluetones play the O2 Academy in Birmingham.

Jazz singer Diana Krall is at the Symphony Hall on Monday, the same night guitar great Albert Lee and Ralph McTell play Birmingham Town Hall. Cliff Richard has sold out his Symphony Hall concert on Tuesday celebrating his 75th birthday.

Ex-Casualty stars in Shawshank play

POPULAR TV actor Ian Kelsey returns to the stage in a play based on a novella by US master of macabre Stephen King.

The former Casualty and Blue Murder star joins fellow former Casualty actor Patrick Robinson in The Shawshank Redemption, a story about friendship and hope in a prison. It was also made into a movie.

It is staged at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to Saturday. Kelsey plays lifer Andy Dufresne and Strictly Come Dancing finalist Robinson plays prison fixer Ellis 'Red' Redding. See www.atgtickets.com/Birmingham or call 0844 871 3011.

Swan Lake marks silver anniversary

BIRMINGHAM Royal Ballet begins its 25th anniversary season at Birmingham Hippodrome by performing the most popular of all ballets, Swan Lake.

The company, which made its move from London to Birmingham in 1990, will feature an ensemble of 50 dancers, a sinfonie of 60 musicians performing Tchaikovsky's score, plus Gothic sets and opulent costumes for this romantic blockbuster. It will be staged from Monday, September 28, to Tuesday, October 6.

The city's premiere of First Steps: A Child's Swan Lake, created for families and young children, is on October 2 at 1pm.

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TUESDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER

PREDATORS TUESDAY NIGHT KARAOKE

WEDNESDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER

LEE O'SULLIVAN

THURSDAY 1ST OCTOBER

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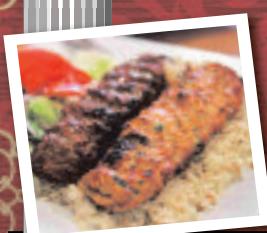
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CHOICE



Tess Daly

BBC1

6.00 Live Formula 1: Japanese Grand Prix – Qualifying. **8.30** Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** James Martin: Home Comforts. **(R) 12.00** BBC News: Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Night Takeaway. **13.00** Formula 1: Japanese Grand Prix – Qualifying. **2.30** Bargain Hunt. **(R) 3.15** Money for Nothing. **4.00** Final Score. **5.10** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.30** Pointless Celebrities. **6.15** Strictly Come Dancing. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman host the second of this weekend's live shows, in which the remainder of the couples take to the floor. **7.45** Doctor Who. It's only the second episode of the new series, and already the chief writer Steven Moffat has put the Time Lord in mortal peril, making him a prisoner of the creatures that hate him most in the universe. Finding himself alone on the terrifying Dalek planet Skaro – with no sonic screwdriver, no Tardis and no one to help – the Doctor only has his wits to keep him alive. Now he faces his greatest temptation – can he resist? And will there be any mercy? Peter Capaldi stars as the time-travelling adventurer. **8.35** The National Lottery: In It to Win It. Dale Winton presents the quiz show in which five contestants answer questions to score a big cash prize. Only those in the winners' row will have a chance of taking home the lot, so they will need to get all the answers right – as well as a little bit of luck on their side. Gaby Roslin hosts the National Lottery draw, and there is a performance by Simply Red. **9.25** Casualty. Terror comes to Holby. Starring Amanda Mealing. **10.15** BBC News: Weather. **10.30** Sports Day. Gary Lineker introduces the highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Tottenham Hotspur v Manchester City at White Hart Lane and Leicester City v Arsenal at the King Power Stadium. Spurs have endured a difficult start to the season, and their fixture against the title favourites was likely to provide an indication as to whether they can challenge for a place in the top four this term. **12.05** Film: Mystery Road. (2013) **2.00** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.50** BBC News. **5.00** Live Formula 1: Japanese Grand Prix.

BBC2

6.10 Film: Journey into Fear. (1943) **7.20** Film: Apache Trail. (1958) **8.30** F1 Rewind: Rivalries. **9.30** Racing Legends: Stirling Moss. **(R) 10.30** Animal Park. (R) **11.00** The Creatures Come to Life. **(R) 11.30** Moon Creatures Great and Small. **(R) 12.00** Great British Menu. **(R) 12.30** Great British Menu. **(R) 1.30** Two Great Men. **(R) 2.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. **(R) 9.00** Jessie. **9.30** ITV News. **10.15** The X Factor. **(R) 12.15** ITV News: Weather. **12.25** Downfall Abbey. **(R) 2.00** Rugby World Cup. Italy v Canada (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Rugby World Cup. South Africa v Samoa (Kick-off 4.45pm). **6.55** Regional Programme: Weather. **7.00** ITV News: Weather. **7.15** Rugby World Cup. England v Wales (Kick-off 8.00pm). Coverage of the Pool A encounter at Twickenham, where the old rivals meet in arguably the most eagerly awaited fixture of the pool stage. Since the draw was made, this pool has been regarded as by far the toughest, with Australia also involved, due to the Welsh being seeded ninth at the time and therefore regarded as one of the third tier of nations. However, their recent record against England shows there is little to call between the nations, and Stuart Lancaster's men will be delighted to have the benefit of home advantage with Wales playing in one of their key fixtures in the pool. There is little love lost between the two, and England will be looking for a third successive victory over Warren Gatland's side, having beaten their opponents in the Six Nations in Cardiff in February in their last encounter. While qualifying for the quarter-finals is the initial aim, there is also an incentive to finish top of the pool and secure a potential route to the final that is expected to avoid defending champions and favourites New Zealand. **10.20** Through the Keyhole. Keith Lemon hosts a revival of the classic game show in which panelists Antony Cotton, Sara Cox and Jimmy Carr are challenged to identify the homes of the rich and famous. **11.20** ITV News: Weather. **11.30** Film: A Walk to Remember. (2002) Romantic drama, starring Mandy Moore and Shane West. **1.05** Film: Strawberry Fields. (2012) **2.30** This Is BBC Two. **5.45** Countryfile. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. **(R) 6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. **(R) 7.00** Signed Name. **(R) 7.30** The Fish Hook. **7.20** Horrid Henry. **7.35** Adventure Time. **8.00** Marvel Avengers Assemble. **8.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. **8.45** The Unforgettable Benny Hill. **(R) 10.15** The X Factor. **(R) 12.15** ITV News: Weather. **12.25** Downfall Abbey. **(R) 2.00** Rugby World Cup. Italy v Canada (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Rugby World Cup. South Africa v Samoa (Kick-off 4.45pm). **6.55** Regional Programme: Weather. **7.00** ITV News: Weather. **7.15** Rugby World Cup. England v Wales (Kick-off 8.00pm). Coverage of the Pool A encounter at Twickenham, where the old rivals meet in arguably the most eagerly awaited fixture of the pool stage. Since the draw was made, this pool has been regarded as by far the toughest, with Australia also involved, due to the Welsh being seeded ninth at the time and therefore regarded as one of the third tier of nations. However, their recent record against England shows there is little to call between the nations, and Stuart Lancaster's men will be delighted to have the benefit of home advantage with Wales playing in one of their key fixtures in the pool. There is little love lost between the two, and England will be looking for a third successive victory over Warren Gatland's side, having beaten their opponents in the Six Nations in Cardiff in February in their last encounter. While qualifying for the quarter-finals is the initial aim, there is also an incentive to finish top of the pool and secure a potential route to the final that is expected to avoid defending champions and favourites New Zealand. **10.20** Through the Keyhole. Keith Lemon hosts a revival of the classic game show in which panelists Antony Cotton, Sara Cox and Jimmy Carr are challenged to identify the homes of the rich and famous. **11.20** ITV News: Weather. **11.30** Film: A Walk to Remember. (2002) Romantic drama, starring Mandy Moore and Shane West. **1.05** Film: Strawberry Fields. (2012) **2.30** This Is BBC Two. **5.45** Countryfile. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.05 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.30** Challenge Weymouth. **7.30** FILM: Superbowl World Championship. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Frasier. **(R) 9.30** Frasier. **(R) 10.00** The Big Bang Theory. **(R) 10.25** FILM: Big Bad Wolves. **(R) 11.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **11.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage of races at Newmarket and Market Rasen. **4.10** Channel 4 News. **4.30** Couples Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.15** Couples Come Dine with Me. (R) **6.00** Location, Location, Location. Kirstie Allsopp is in the countryside surrounding Edinburgh helping Ian find a new home – but it soon becomes clear that he is more interested in finding the right shed for his collection of cars and tools than somewhere to lay his head. Phil Spencer is with Roger and Jane, who suffer from chronic indecision when it comes to house hunting – and that's the least thing they need as they have to find a home fast before their first baby arrives in three months' time. **7.00** Celebrity Benchmark. New series. Paddy McGuinness hosts a celebrity version of the game show in which contestants Jimmy Carr and Joey Essex must decide how many of the great British public and a series of tricky numerical questions – then quickly decide whether the correct answer is higher or lower. **8.00** FILM: Sneeze & the Human. (2012) An evil queen learns that her reign will last for ever if she kills a princess, so sends a renowned warrior to find and murder her. However, he comes to realise his mistress's evil ways, and instead trains his intended victim to fight so they can bring the tyrant's rule to an end. Fantasy adventure, with Kristen Stewart, Chris Hemsworth and Charlize Theron. **10.30** FILM: Van Helsing. (2004) A vampire slayer sets out to help a gypsy princess vanquish Count Dracula and his three brides once and for all. Action adventure, starring Hugh Jackman. **1.05** Alan Carr: Chatty Man. (R) **2.00** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.05** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **4.25** Deal or No Deal: Double Trouble – Grandparents. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** SpongeBob SquarePants. **10.35** Cowboy Builders. (R) **11.30** Cowboy Builders. (R) **12.30** Cowboy Builders & Badge Jobs. (R) **1.20** Film: Come to Gubs. (1990) **2.00** Detective drama, starring Peter Falk. **3.20** FILM: Columbo: Death Hits the Jackpot. (1991) **5.15** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. **6.10** Can't We? We'll Take It If Away. Paul and Steve call for urgent police back-up after opening a locked wooden case they find while carrying out an eviction notice at a flat in London's Docklands. (R) **7.10** FILM: Army. New series. A collection of viral videos that have already found billions of fans on the internet, including painful pratfalls and hilarious animal antics. **7.35** FILM: Army. This week's collection of viral videos focuses on the fearless and recklessly ambitious, including a gymnast who kicks the girl he is trying to impress in the ribs. **8.00** Now That's Funny! New series. A collection of internet-sourced videos with a family friendly hook, featuring laugh-out-loud unexpected personal moments now being shared with the world. **8.55** 5 News Weekend. **9.00** Football League Tonight. Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's top matches, including the west London derby between Fulham and Queens Park Rangers in the Championship. Friday's game was the first time the sides had met in this division since the 2000/01 season, when the Cottagers did the double over Rangers, promotion to the Premier League. QPR were relegated to the third tier at the end of that season, where they would stay until gaining promotion in 2004. Plus, action from the other Championship games, as well as all the goals from League One and League Two. **10.30** Stevie Wonder: An All-Star Grammy Salute. An all-star line-up including Beyoncé, Lady Gaga and Ed Sheeran salute Stevie Wonder with songs from his stellar songbook, before the man himself takes the stage. (R) **12.15** The Gadget Show. (R) **1.05** SuperCasino. **3.10** Spike Fight Night: BAMBAA. **4.50** Make It Big. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** Top Gear: The Best of Series 22 **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride. **9.00** Russell Howard's Good News. **10.00** Film: The 1st State (2001) **11.25** Family Guy. **1.40** Russell Howard's Good News. **2.10** Orphan Black. **3.35** People Time. **4.00** Close. **BBC Four** **7.00** Operation Jericho. **8.00** The Engine That Powers the World: Timeshift. **9.00** Beck: The Family. **10.30** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley. **11.30** Hot Chocolate at the BBC. **12.30** Boogie Fever: A TOTP2 Disco Special. **2.00** Nine Rodgers: The Hitmaker. **3.00** The Joy of Discs. **4.00** Close. **ITV2** **7.05** You've Been Framed! **1.05** The X Factor. **3.10** The Xtra Factor. **4.15** Catchphrase. **4.55** FILM: Nilm's Island (2006). **6.00** FILM: The Incredibility 2: Armed and Fabulous. (2005) **7.00** FILM: The Book-End Plan. (2011) **11.15** Celebrity Juice: Ultimate Throwback Thursday Special. **12.00** Safeworld. **1.25** Totality. **2.00** Bankers' Guinness World Records. **1.50** Crazy Beaches. **2.15** Animal Practice. **2.40** Teleshopping. **4.00** FILM: **ITV3** **12.40** Foyle's War. **6.55** Doc Martin. **8.00** Lewis. **10.00** A Touch of Frost. **12.15** Wire in the Blood. **1.35** Murder. She Wrote. **2.25** ITV3 Nightscreen. **2.30** Teleshopping. **ITV4** **11.40** The Professionals. **12.45** Pawn Stars. **2.05** British Gunfighters. **3.00** FILM: Championship Highlights 3. **3.10** FILM: Rio Bravo (1959). **6.00** Storage Wars: New York. **7.00** Storage Wars. **7.30** FILM: Cannibal Run II. (1984). **9.45** FILM: National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1 (1993). **11.30** FILM: First Blood (1982). **1.20** Minder. **2.20** Hogan's Heroes. **2.45** Teleshopping. **4.00** FILM: **ITV4** Nightscreen. **3.00** Teleshopping. **E4** **11.00** The Goldbergs. **12.00** FILM: Hop (2011). **2.05** The Big Bang Theory. **6.00** FILM: Maid in Manhattan (2002). **8.00** The Big Bang Theory: Top 5 Penny. **10.30** Penny. **12.00** Storage Wars. **1.10** RudeTube. **1.40** How I Met Your Mother. **2.35** The Inbetweeners. **3.25** 2. **4.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine. **4.35** Revenge. **Film4** **11.00** Guadalcanal Diary (1943). **1.00** Dear John (2010). **3.20** The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010). **5.45** Avatar (2009). **9.00** Black Hawk Down (2001). **12.00** Piranha 3DD (2012). **1.40** Clerks (1994). **3.35** Close

Trustees required

Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen Charity

Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen is a registered charity that enjoys a long-standing reputation for offering a range of services within the Dudley borough for the elderly, helping them to make the most of later life. We are proud to be a local charity for local people.

The Charity faces a challenging future as it prepares for the impact of cut-backs in funding from the local authority.

We are seeking to appoint new Trustees with the skills to support the Board in managing the strategic changes required. Expertise in the areas of Finance, HR and Fundraising would be particularly useful, as well as an enthusiasm and commitment for service to the community.

Appointments are usually for three years with a commitment of between six to twelve days a year to attend Board and Sub-Committee meetings. Trustees are unpaid but may be reimbursed for reasonable out of pocket expenses.

CVs and a covering letter in MS Word format should be submitted by e-mail please to dionnelegge@acstourbridge.plus.com.

Closing date: 12 noon on 9th October 2015
Interviews will be held towards the end of October.

The Elton Centre, St John's Rd, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1EJ.
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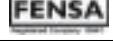
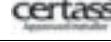


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Before



After

CHOICE

BBC1

9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. **(R) 1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Formula 1: Japanese Grand Prix. **2.00** Play. **3.15** Eat Well for Less. **(R) 4.15** The Great British Bake Off. **5.15** Points of View. **5.30** Songs of Praise.

6.05 BBC News.

6.20 Regional Programme.

6.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Ellie Harrison present this year's One Man and His Dog competition, from Chirk Castle, North Wales, and discover the conservation work being carried out in the area. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

7.30 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Broughton Castle, near Banbury, Oxfordshire. She finds include a book of police mug shots, a Victorian baby bouncer and a musical penknife.

8.30 Cider with Rosie. Anyone who studied English Literature in the 1980s will know this story immediately as Cider with Rosie was the set text for a generation of school pupils. Now BBC One presents it as the latest in their season of classic 20th-century literature adaptations. Laurie Lee's autobiographical memoir is an evocative coming-of-age story set in an idyllic Cotswold village during and after the First World War. It follows Young Loo as he experiences first love, loss and family upheaval while growing to manhood in an environment seemingly untouched by the trappings of the modern world. Samantha Morton, Jessica Hynes, Ruby Ashbourne Serkis and June Whitfield star.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Watford v Crystal Palace at Vicarage Road, and all the goals from Saturday's fixtures.

11.20 The Women's Football Show. A look at the biggest issues in the women's game, focusing on matters at both club and international level.

11.50 Imagine. **(R)**

12.45 Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.45 Gardeners' World. **(R) 7.15** The Beechgrove Garden. **7.45** Match of the Day. **(R) 9.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **10.45** Great British Menu. **(R) 11.45** Great British Bake Off. **(R) 12.15** MOTD2 Extra: 100 Hammers Under the Hammer. **(R) 2.00** Escape to the Country. **(R) 3.00** Cycling. **4.30** Flog It! **(R) 5.30** Patagonia: Earth's Secret Paradise. **(R) 6.30** World's Weirdest Events. Chris Packham explores some amazing stories, unearthing a whirlwind wedding ceremony. **(R) 7.30**

The Great British Bake Off: An Extra. Julie and three celebrity fans of BBC One's baking contest discuss the good and the bad of an episode in which the challenges included a brief to create a religieuse à l'ancienne, namely three tiers of choux pastry éclairs filled with creme paté, iced and decorated with buttercream. There is also unseen footage from the programme and an interview with the latest contestant to be eliminated. **(R)**

8.00 Top Gear: Best of Series 22. The team looks back at highlights of the motoring series, including the fastest new models, the most desirable classics and the craziest stunts.

9.00 Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week. The ten remaining recruits are overseen by a representative of a Russian special forces unit. He requires them to carry heavy weights through the gruelling hills of south Wales.

10.00 Family Guy. Meg gets a job at the airport, while Cleveland becomes a therapist and gives relationship advice to Peter and Lois.

10.25 Family Guy. Brian uses Stewie's time machine to impress women at bars, but ends up breaking it and causing time to move in reverse. When they try to rebuild it, it explodes.

11.10 Film: Youth in Revolt. (2009) An awkward 16-year-old meets the girl of his dreams on holiday and embarks on a series of elaborate misadventures to be with her. Comedy, starring Michael Cera.

12.35 Film: Love Like Poison. (2010) **1.55** Sign Zone: Countryfile. **(R) 2.50** Holby City. **(R) 3.50** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. **(R) 6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. **(R) 6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. **(R) 6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. **(R) 7.00** Signed Stories: Show a Bit More. **(R) 7.15** Hatter Chronicles. **8.00** Marvel Avengers Assemble. **8.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. **(R) 9.00** Horrible Science. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. **(R) 10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. **(R) 11.30** Rugby World Cup. **1.55** Rugby World Cup. Scotland v USA (Kick off 2.30pm). **4.30** Rugby World Cup.

6.45 Regional Programme; Weather. **7.00** ITV News: Weather.

7.00 The X Factor. The contestants face the next stage of Boot Camp as they perform for judges Nick Grimshaw, Rita Ora, Cheryl Fernandez-Vivini and Simon Cowell in the grand surroundings of a country house. If they succeed in impressing the panel, they stand to win one of the coveted places in the six chair challenge and be one step closer to victory.

9.00 Downton Abbey. It's the final series of Julian Fellowes' hugely successful upstairs-downstairs drama, but fans needn't shed a tear just yet, as there are seven episodes to go, plus a Christmas special to wrap things up. Tonight, plans for the wedding are gathering steam, but Lady Mary's meddling lands Carson in trouble with Mrs Hughes. Cora and Violet clash over the future of the hospital takeover, and Thomas's job search is proving disheartening. Mary comes up with a fresh idea that offers Anna fresh hope, prompting a trip to London, and Lady Edith faces challenges at the magazine although it's a problem closer to home that reaches breaking point. A day for the family and servants ends in panic and leaves Robert facing a difficult decision.

10.00 ITV News: Weather.

10.20 Rugby World Cup Highlights. Australia v Uruguay, Scotland v USA and Ireland v Romania. Action from the Pool-stage matches, which took place at Villa Park, Elland Road and Wembley Stadium respectively.

11.20 Perspectives: Eddie Redmayne on War Art. **(R)**

12.20 Murder, She Wrote. **(R) 1.20** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** British Superbike Championship Highlights. **4.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 How I Met Your Mother. **(R) 6.35** The Grid. **7.05** Volkswagen Racing Cup. **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. **(R) 8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. **(R) 8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. **(R) 9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. **12.30** The Big Bang Theory. **(R) 12.55** The Big Bang Theory. **(R) 1.25** Film: Beaches. (1983) Drama, starring Bette Midler and Barbara Hershey. **8.00** Wanda and the Alien. **(R) 8.10** Zock and Quack. **(R) 8.25** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. **(R) 8.45** Jelly Jamm. **(R) 9.00** LazyTown. **(R) 9.30** Dora and Friends. **(R) 9.55** SpongeBob SquarePants.

10.30 Football League Tonight. **(R) 12.55** Police Interceptors. **(R) 1.55** Film: 2012. (2009) Disaster movie, starring John Cusack. **4.50** Film: Planet of the Apes. (2001) Sci-fi adventure remake, starring Mark Wahlberg.

7.00 Film: Jackie Chan's The Forbidden Kingdom. (2008) An American teenager obsessed with kung fu movies is sent back in time to ancient China, where he joins the battle to free the imprisoned Monkey King. The only problem is he has no martial arts skills of his own, and will need the assistance of two legendary warriors to become the hero he needs to be. Martial arts adventure, starring Jet Li and Jackie Chan. Edited for violence and language.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Time Crashers. The final challenge takes the contestants back to the Iron Age to experience life in a 34AD. Greg Rutherford and Meg Mathews are elected as the group's tribal chiefs and they have two days to prepare a Celtic feast, as well as dealing with the more pressing concerns of heat, light and food. Jermaine Jenas struggles to get to grips with making fire and Chris Ramsey has trouble skinning a deer in the dark. Last in the series.

8.00 First Humans: The Cave Discovery. Documentary following the discovery of fossilised remains in a South African cave that were revealed to have come from a previously unknown species of human ancestor.

9.00 This is England '90. Life begins to take a darker turn as autumn draws in and the town's royalty and forgiveness are tested to the limit among the group of young friends in the penultimate episode of Shane Meadows' 1990-set drama.

Lol finds herself confronted with a seemingly impossible task and is forced to face up to some uncomfortable truths. Kelly continues on her downward spiral, while Shaun escapes the troubles of the present with a trip down memory lane. Starring Vicky McClure, **9.30** Film: Welcome to the Jungle.

(2003) A bounty hunter on a rescue mission in the rainforest is drawn into a quest for a legendary artefact. Action comedy, with Dwayne Johnson, Sean William Scott and Christopher Walken.

10.05 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. Narrated by Caroline Aherne. **(R)**

11.10 Film: This Is It. (2012) Premiere. Comedy, starring Paul Rudd.

1.40 World of Weird. **(R) 2.40** Come Dine with Me. **(R) 4.25** Location, Location, Location. **(R)**

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. **(R) 6.20** Angelina Ballerina. **(R) 6.30** Pop Ahoy! **(R) 6.45** Ticky Toc. **(R) 6.55** Child's Closet. **(R) 7.05** Roobarb and Custard Too. **(R) 7.15** Mel and Kim. **(R) 7.25** Paw Patrol. **(R) 7.45** Little Einsteins. **(R) 8.00** Wanda and the Alien. **(R) 8.10** Zock and Quack. **(R) 8.25** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. **(R) 8.45** Jelly Jamm. **(R) 9.00** LazyTown. **(R) 9.30** Dora and Friends. **(R) 9.55** SpongeBob SquarePants.

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1.40 World of Weird. **(R) 2.40** Come Dine with Me. **(R) 4.25** Location, Location, Location. **(R)**

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Formula 1: Japanese Grand Prix – Highlights. **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride 2. **9.00** Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides (2011). **11.05** Family Guy. **11.30** American Dad! **12.10** Family Guy. **12.35** Top Coppers. **1.00** Fried 1.30. **Orphan Black** **3.00** Girls Can Code **4.00** Close.

BBC Four

7.00 Arvo Part/Robert Wilson: The Lost Paradise. **8.00** The Last Journey of the Magna Carta King. **9.00** Egypt's Lost Cities **10.30** Film: Ilo Ilo (2013). **12.05** Britain's Most Fragile Treasure. **1.05** Bought with Love: The Secret History of British Art Collections. **2.05** British on Film: This Sceptred Isle **2.35** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **3.35** Close.

ITV2

12.35 Catchphrase Celebrity Special **1.35** You've Been Framed! **3.10** Film: Nilm's Island (2008). **5.05** Film: The Polar Express (2004). **7.00** Film: Uncle Buck (1989). **9.00** The Xtra Factor **10.00** Film: 2006 (2006). **12.20** Viral Tag **1.05** Reality Bites **1.45** Totally Bonkers **2.00** Guinness World Records **2.10** Teleloping **5.40** ITV2 Nightscree

ITV3

12.35 Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide **2.30** Foyle's War **9.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium **10.00** Birds of a Feather **10.35** City Lights **11.15** Wycliffe **1.15** Film: Ooh, You Are Awful (1972) **2.50** ITV3 Nightscree **3.15** Emmerdale

ITV4

6.30 Goodwood Cars of the Future – Racing **7.30** Goodwood Revival 2015

8.30 Storage Wars **9.00** Film: Waterworld (1995). **11.40** Film: Rambo: First Blood Part II (1985). **1.45** Hell on Wheels **2.40** Motorway Patrol **3.00** Teleloping

E4

12.30 Film: Horton Hears a Who! (2008). **2.15** Rude(ish) Tube Short **2.30** Couples Come Dine with Me **4.30** Bad(ish) Robots

5.00 The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Star Trek (2009). **10.30** The Inbetweeners **11.30** The IT Crowd **12.35** Rude Tube

1.40 Young, Free & Single **2.45** Rules of Engagement **3.35** Hollyoaks

Film4

11.00 Man Without a Star (1955). **1.00** City of Ember (2008). **2.55** Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs (2009). **4.40** Journey to the Center of the Earth (2008). **6.30** A Good Year (2006). **9.00** Kingdom of Heaven (2005). **12.45** Lesson of Evil (2012). **3.25** Close

(2012) **3.25** Close

This Is England '90 (Channel 4, 9pm)

Life begins to take a darker turn as autumn draws in and honesty, loyalty and forgiveness are tested to the limit among the group of young friends in the penultimate episode of Shane Meadows' 1990-set drama. Lol finds herself confronted with a seemingly impossible task and is forced to face up to some uncomfortable truths. Kelly continues on her downward spiral, while Shaun escapes the troubles of the present with a trip down memory lane. Starring Vicky McClure, Thomas Turgoose, Chanel Cresswell, Andrew Ellis, Andrew Shim, Billy Brighthouse, Danielle Watson and Helen Behan.



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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Battu's Bioscope, Channel 4, 2am
Andrzej Fidly's documentary about a mobile cinema run by Mr Battu and his two assistants, the young Amit and 80-year-old Mama. They travel in a rickety old truck and show B-grade Indian movies using an ancient projector and a few white sheets. (1999)

TUESDAY

Finding a Family, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A teenager who was placed in the care of the state after a car crash left his mother unable to cope devotes himself to his academic career, hoping to gain a place in a respected university. Fact-based drama, starring Jared Abrahamson and Kim Delaney. (2011)

WEDNESDAY

Sliding Doors, BBC1, 11.45pm

A London woman's entire future hinges on whether or not she catches a train. In one version of events, she gets the chance to start afresh and lead a happy new life, but in the other she is stuck supporting her lazy, unfaithful boyfriend. Comedy drama, presenting two parallel stories featuring the same character. Starring Gwyneth Paltrow and John Hannah. (1998)



The Expendables, Thursday, Channel 5, 10pm

THURSDAY

The Expendables, Channel 5, 10pm

A mercenary leads his elite team on a mission to assassinate a South American dictator, only to find their target is merely a pawn and the real power in the country is a rogue CIA agent. Feeling they have been double-crossed, they abandon the operation – but are compelled to return and save a captured rebel. Action thriller, starring Sylvester Stallone. With Jet Li. (2010)

FRIDAY

Fast & Furious, ITV, 11.20pm

News of a friend's murder brings international fugitive Dominic Toretto back to his home city of Los Angeles in search of revenge. It is not long before his pursuit leads him to cross paths with FBI agent Brian O'Conor, and despite their hostile feelings toward each other, the pair work together to bring down those responsible. Thriller sequel, starring Vin Diesel, Paul Walker and Jordana Brewster. (2009)

Carol plays host to the heroes of the Nation

Have your hankies at the ready because one of the most moving ceremonies of the year is with us again.

Of course, Carol Vorderman is no stranger to the Pride of Britain Awards, but she admits they don't get any easier to host after all these years.

"It's a massive show to do, the volume that you have to learn and hold and you have to get the tone right," she explains.

"There have been loads really. The saddest ones are the children who have been ill and then have either raised a lot of money for charity or done something remarkable and then get ill again and are no longer with us and that's really hard, it really knocks it home."

One of the reasons the shows

ago. I'm not just someone who is brought in on the night, I've lived it and breathed it."

Is there any winner that stood out for her?

"There have been loads really. The saddest ones are the children who have been ill and then have either raised a lot of money for charity or done something remarkable and then get ill again and are no longer with us and that's really hard, it really knocks it home."

"Because everybody travels down to London from all over the country, it's the first time they have met each other and we introduce them all.

"I try to sit and talk with everybody and at the end of the dinner I go through all of their stories, and what's remarkable is every single one of them turns around and says 'I shouldn't be here, I'm not worthy.'

They are so modest. They get

great strength from meeting each other before too."

One of the most poignant prizes of last year was the first posthumous award in honour of Stephen Sutton, the blogger and activist who spent his final days raising money for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

"I remember we pushed his fundraising over the £5million mark on the night," recalls Carol. "But it's not just about people who have been ill. The lifetime achievement awards are for ordinary people that we wouldn't read about in normal Press, but they have done these remarkable things; they aren't celebrity driven or media driven or anything, and the person who has won that this year is astonishing."

Carol admits plenty of winners

made her cry this year.

"One in particular, it was one of the Children of Courage winners. We saw some film at the judging panel. When you read a story it's not the same as seeing it and what this little boy did was extraordinary – I blubbed."

MONDAY

Doc Martin
ITV, 9pm

Louisa and Martin have their first therapy session together – though neither of them was expected they would be given homework – while Morwenna is not happy about it when a teenager on work experience starts trying to boss her around in the surgery. Mrs Tishell is surprised when her husband Clive returns and she wants to give things another go, and Louisa has to call Martin when one of her pupils collapses during a school excursion.

Coldplay, Ed Sheeran, Beyoncé and Pearl Jam at the Global Citizen Festival

BBC1, 10.35pm

The Global Citizen Festival has been running since 2011 and last year secured financial commitments for tackling extreme poverty and disease, totalling \$1.3billion – but clearly the work is ongoing, because its aim once again was to raise money and awareness in a bid to end poverty. The 2015 bash took place at New York's Central Park last weekend and was hosted by such luminaries as Hugh Jackman and Salma Hayek. Sadly, the BBC's highlights package was woefully short, but it promises to have all the best bits from the event's headliners, including Beyoncé.

TUESDAY

Britain's Biggest Adventures with Bear Grylls
ITV, 9pm

He's trekked around Snowdonia in North Wales and explored the Yorkshire Dales – now Bear Grylls goes north of the border to the Scottish Highlands on an adventure that takes him from the deepest point in Britain to its highest mountain, Ben Nevis. Along the way he goes in search of freshwater pearl mussels, one of the most endangered species in the world, heads for the hills to discover how the country's magnificent highlands were formed and hears about a plan to save an ancient forest under threat because the native Scots pine has been over-run by a non-native species.

WEDNESDAY

All Star Mr & Mrs

ITV, 8pm

The honeymoon period might be over for another three couples as Phillip Schofield returns to test their knowledge of each other's likes, dislikes and habits. First up are former Corrie actor Jimi Mistry and his wife, one-time Strictly Come Dancing dancer Flavia Cacace-Mistry, tennis legend Martina

Navratilova and her wife Julia Lemigova, and Good Morning Britain presenter Sean Fletcher and his wife Luned. The three couples reveal how much they know about each other over two rounds, before the winners play for £30,000 for their chosen charity. However, no one walks away empty-handed, as the

losers each receive £5,000 for a good cause – not to mention the much-coveted Mr & Mrs carriage clock.

Doctor Foster
BBC1, 9pm

After the revelation that those around her are also holding onto secrets, Gemma throws herself into a new start with her husband. However, when the respected senior GP discovers that someone is out to get her on a professional level, she must steel herself as the pressure begins to mount. Simon appears to be supportive of her, but she needs to make a decision as to whether or not the man she married is to be trusted. Starring Suranne Jones.

THURSDAY

Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1, 9pm

Anita Rani makes her second BBC One appearance of the week, although unlike her Strictly Come Dancing performance, this delve into her family's past proves to be a much more sobering affair. Anita never met her maternal grandfather Sam Singh, but she knows he had another wife and family before meeting her grandmother – and that he suffered terrible tragedy at the time of India's Partition. Here the broadcaster travels to India to see if she can find out more about his first family and what happened to them.

FRIDAY

Have I Got News for You

BBC1, 9pm

New series. Team captains Ian Hislop and Paul Merton bound back for the 50th run of the series, which has been appearing regularly on BBC screens now since 1990. They will find a domestic political climate much changed since the spring, now that the Conservatives have settled into majority government and the Labour opposition has undergone a transformation. But it may prove quite a feat for them and their guest participants to find a humorous edge to many of the current world affairs stories.

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Open Evenings

For prospective pupils
and parents

Monday 28th September 2015
Wednesday 30th September 2015
6.30pm - 9.30pm

The evenings will start with an address by the Executive Headteacher, Keith Sorrell.

Open Mornings

Tuesday 29th September 2015
Thursday 1st October 2015
9.30am



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Find out more at: www.kes.org.uk/opendays
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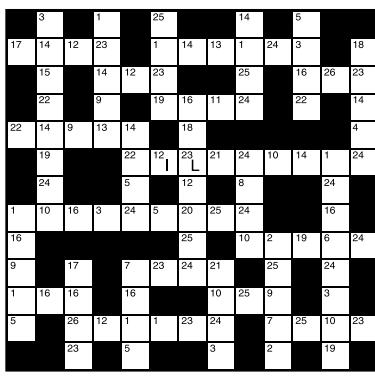
Carol Vorderman, The Pride of Britain Awards 2015, Thursday, ITV, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

BRAIN GYM No.344

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
N	R	I	C	L	M	Z	Q	X	D	E	T	U													

Quiz

1. When was Count von Zeppelin's first airship built?
 2. Which famous king was son of Findlaech?
 3. What sort of fruit is a morello?
 4. In which year did Sitting Bull die?
 5. What is a pixel?

6. What is the capital of Corsica?
 7. What is the SI unit of electrical charge?
 8. Which artist painted Nude Descending a Staircase?
 9. In which country is Casablanca?
 10. What are the international vehicle registration letters for Bahrain?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Allan Pinkerton;
 2 Scarlet pimpernel; 3 Lady Jane Grey;
 4 Elizabeth Barrett Browning; 5 Cobalt; 6 Goldfish; 7 Tonto; 8 Duke Ellington;
 9 Professor Plum; 10 Cherry.
 Niner: INSULATED

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Begin with a counter-claim? (3-3)
2. Attack makes idiot be ill (6)
3. Everything free in vain (3,3,7)
4. Gives out that I am to get thong back (7)
5. Colonist who pays up? (7)
6. Natural exuberance shown by beastly ghosts? (6,7)
7. Mental powers that dispel the gloom? (6)
8. Pick-me-up in cot (5)
10. Get over being annoyed? (5)
12. Sluggers on film? (5)
13. Creatures belong to religious bodies (7)
14. Red racer at pit? (5)
15. As created by quarrelsome actors? (5)
16. Reasonable stipulation as to not bad state (4,9)
17. Thinner person resting? (6)
22. Sign up (6)
23. See art as a difficult puzzle (6)

Down

1. Not moving from the attics (6)
2. It shows the cost of rings (9,4)
3. Speaker, not the chairman holds it (5)
4. Colonist who pays up? (7)
5. Natural exuberance shown by beastly ghosts? (6,7)
6. Mental powers that dispel the gloom? (6)
7. Employed partly to train us each week (2,3)
8. Toy with the sweet, perhaps (6)
9. Reporter (13)
10. Harbour (7)
11. Happen (5)
12. Decree (5)
14. Collection (5)
18. Contract (5)
19. Blow up (7)
21. Working together (13)
22. Audacious (6)
23. Opportunity (6)

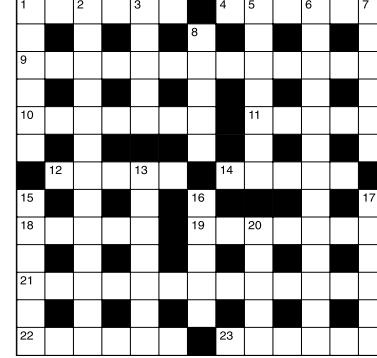
Quick Clues:

Across

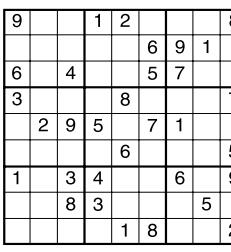
1. Seem (6)
4. Suitable (6)
9. Reporter (13)
10. Harbour (7)
11. Happen (5)
12. Decree (5)
14. Collection (5)
18. Contract (5)
19. Blow up (7)
21. Working together (13)
22. Audacious (6)
23. Opportunity (6)

Down

1. Admission (6)
2. Vertical (13)
3. Representative (5)
5. Spitefulness (7)
6. Absorption (13)
7. Withdraw (6)
8. Extra (5)
13. Sure (7)
15. Flinched (6)
16. Less (5)
17. Alliance (6)
20. Gleam (5)



Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >
 3 1 9 5 8 6 7 2 4
 6 4 8 9 2 7 1 3 5
 2 5 7 1 3 4 6 9 8
 5 7 2 3 8 9 4 1 6
 8 1 4 5 9 3 7 2 0
 9 3 6 4 8 5 6 1 7
 1 8 5 2 9 3 4 6 7
 7 2 6 8 4 5 3 1 9
 9 3 4 6 7 1 5 8 2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Pair of braces; 7 Final; 8 Rider; 9 Won; 10 Closeness; 11 Torero; 12 Estate; 15 Forestall; 17 Now; 18 River; 19 Medal; 21 Growing pains. Down: 1 Play with fire; 2 Own; 3 Below; 4 Air-vessel; 5 Endue; 6 Crossed wires; 7 Fins; 8 Corkscrew; 9 Tarnish; 10 Generator; 11 Impale; 12 Albion; 15 Erratically; 17 Tor; 18 China; 19 Baker; 21 In attendance. Down: 1 Give evidence; 2 See; 3 Extend; 4 Laterally; 5 Cheat; 6 Rear entrance; 7 Cheap; 10 Gallivant; 13 Inter; 14 Feeble; 16 Union; 20 Kid.

Thinking space



MIG Welding Level 1

The Course

This course is designed for:

- Anyone who would like to work in the welding and fabrication industry and wants to gain a recognised qualification in MIG welding.
- Individuals with little or no welding experience who want to improve their welding skills to a level where they can butt-weld and T-weld on flat plate.

Course Benefits

- By the end of the course, will be able to set and safely operate MIG welding equipment and be able butt-weld and T-weld on flat plate.
- Employment within the construction / fabrication industry.

Application Criteria

- There are no formal entry requirements.

Course Content

- Safety as applied to the MIG/MAG welding process
- Welding defects (porosity, lack of fusion, undercut etc)
- Fault analysis and correction
- Requirements for a good weld
- Gas identification and application
- Identification of controls
- Setting and adjusting controls for welding modes (spray and dip transfer)
- Types of filler wire and applications
- Basic joint designs
- Butt joint and fillet joints to ASME IX / EN 287

Course Duration & Costs

- 1 week daytime block course (38 hours): £400 without PPE / £450 inclusive of PPE
- 7-week night school (4 hours per week over 2 nights): £350 without PPE / £400 inclusive of PPE

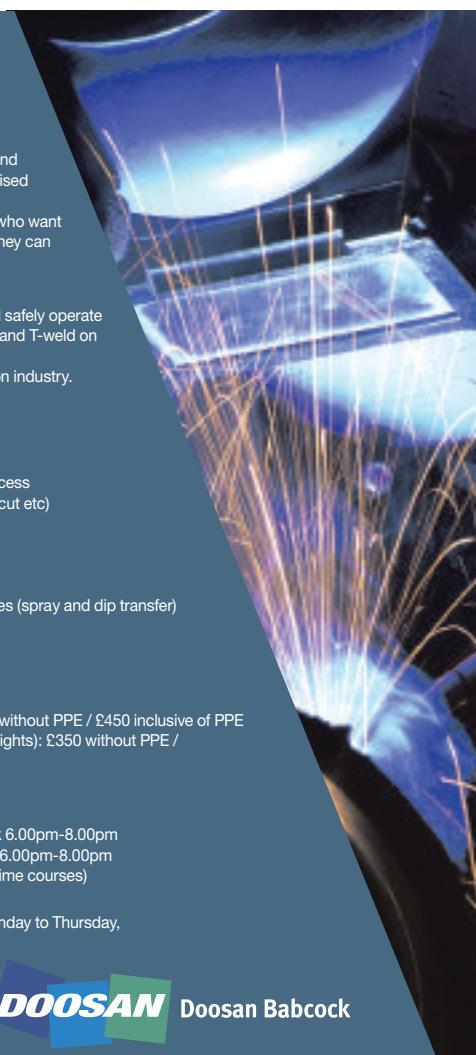
Course dates

Part time course:
 5th October to 20th November, 2 nights per week 6.00pm-8.00pm
 11th January to 27th February, 2 nights per week 6.00pm-8.00pm
 (Minimum 10 learners and maximum 15 for part-time courses)

Full time course:
 5th October to 9th October, 8.00am- 4.30pm Monday to Thursday, 7.00am-1.00pm Friday

To book this course or for further information please contact:

Clive Gilbert 0121 530 5157
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BRIERLEY HILL, Gayfield Avenue £775 pcm+ Fees
Superb modern & totally refurbished 4 bedroom detached house on this very popular estate. (Withymoor Village). Featuring an entrance hall leading to study room, downstairs w.c, large lounge with separate dining room, fitted kitchen with 'Country Chef' range cooker, 3 double bedrooms & 1 single, family bathroom with shower, garage & driveway. Not to be missed!! EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Grange Road £750 pcm+ Fees
A fantastic opportunity to rent this lovely traditional semi-detached house in central Halesowen which is ideal for shops, transport links and access to Birmingham City Centre. This property comprises of: Front reception room with bay window and feature fireplace, bay windowed rear lounge, modern fitted kitchen, beautiful rear garden, 2 good size double bedrooms and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, garage. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Blackberry Lane £695 pcm+ Fees
A superb recently decorated throughout including new carpets is this 3 bedroom semi-detached house in central Halesowen. This lovely home has a welcoming hallway, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, conservatory, downstairs w.c, 3 good size bedrooms, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, front & rear gardens, driveway parking, EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Atwood Street £675 pcm+ Fees
Large spacious corner and terrace available with double bedrooms. Featuring, gch & double glazing, requiring internal inspection and comprising, hallway, 2 reception rooms both with feature fireplace, downstairs 4th bedroom, attractive re-fitted kitchen with fitted range cooker, gallery landing with 3 double bedrooms off, attractive house bathroom with corner suite and separate shower cubicle, garage and pleasant courtyard. Available Now. EPC: F



HALESOWEN, Sanderson Place £950 pcm+ Fees
Luxury living in Hayley Green. A superb ground floor apartment offering spacious accommodation including open plan lounge/kitchen and diner, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, further well appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. EPC: B



PEARWOOD, Marlborough Road £925 pcm+ Fees
A superb 2 bedroom mid terrace house located in this very popular area of Bearwood. The property offers spacious accommodation with 2 reception rooms, modern kitchen with oven/hob, 2 double bedrooms, beautiful family bathroom with corner shower & free standing bath, private rear garden. On road parking. Available Now. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Talbot Street £575 pcm+ Fees
A fabulously newly renovated mid-terrace house with complete re-wire, new alarm system, new roof, new 'A' rated boiler, gas central heating, new double glazing, new kitchen, new bathroom, new shower, new fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 3 bedrooms, rear garden, on road parking, ideally located a short distance from local shops, Cradley Train Station and the number 9 bus route. Available Now. EPC: E



ROWLEY REGIS, Cleve View £550 pcm+ Fees
An fantastic opportunity to rent a new build property on a selected development. This 2 bed end terrace is finished to a high standard. The property features 2 double bedrooms, 1 double aspect, 2 French doors opening to a large rear garden, modern fitted kitchen with integrated cooker/hob, downstairs w.c, 2 double bedrooms both with large fitted wardrobes. Also benefits from off road rear parking for 2 cars, double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Whitehall Court £525 pcm+ Fees
Centrally located to Halesowen Town Centre is this well presented 1st floor flat with private entrance, hallway, kitchen with appliances, living room, bathroom with newly fitted shower, 2 good size bedrooms, communal garden & secure parking to rear of property. Available Now. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Talbot Street £525 pcm+ Fees
•1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE• Step inside this fantastic 3 bedroom terrace property and you have the opportunity to be the occupiers of this stunning property. Renovated throughout, featuring a lovely kitchen, 3 tiled bathroom, windows & doors, carpets and gas central heating system. The property also benefits from patio doors leading onto the garden and an electric shower over the bath. EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Bloomfield Street North £525 pcm+ Fees
An unfurnished semi-detached house within walking distance of Newfield Park Primary, Windsor High School and Halesowen College. This property features 2 reception rooms, 2 double bedrooms both with fitted wardrobes, downstairs w.c, bathroom with shower, upstairs shower room, fitted kitchen, gas central heating, double glazing. EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Hope Street £495 pcm+ Fees
A fully refurbished ground floor apartment having spacious lounge, refitted kitchen with integrated oven and hob, 3 bedrooms, refitted bathroom and newly fitted carpets. The apartment has a garage and gardens to front and rear, full double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: D



ROWLEY REGIS, Mildred Way £495 pcm+ Fees
A beautifully presented and located in a quiet road, is this unfurnished split level semi detached bungalow, briefly comprising of: 1 gallery bedroom with walk in wardrobe, downstairs bathroom with shower, modern fitted kitchen, double glazing, rear garden, driveway parking. EPC: E



SEDGLEY, Tudor Vale £495 pcm+ Fees
Located in this ever popular cul-de-sac is this end terrace house, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted dining kitchen, downstairs WC, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, driveway parking, unfurnished. EPC: C



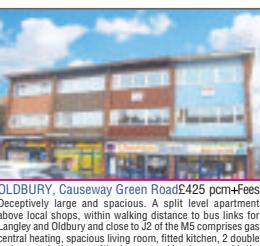
TIPTON, Ferguson Drive £480 pcm+ Fees
A lovely modern 2nd floor apartment which will benefit from a new internal re-decoration before the commencement of a new tenancy. Featuring 2 bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, loft space, electric storage heating, double glazing, 2 allocated parking spaces, communal gardens, internal viewing recommended. Deposit £750. EPC: C



NETHERTON, Round Street £475 pcm+ Fees
Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi detached house. Featuring gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double and 1 single bedroom, house bathroom with shower, rear garden, driveway parking, and 2 cars. In very popular area and good transport links for Merry Hill, 2 MONTHS DEPOSIT AND A GUARANTOR REQUIRED. (THE GUARANTOR MUST BE A HOME OWNER, FAMILY MEMBER AND WORKING) EPC: D



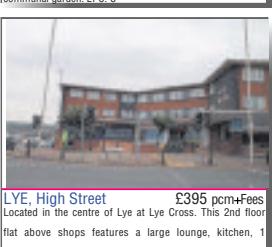
HALESOWEN, Hamilton Avenue £450 pcm+ Fees
An unfurnished ground floor flat, on a popular development of the Abbey Fields. A lovely apartment which is not to be missed features 1 double bedroom, modern fitted kitchen, spacious lounge, electric storage heating, double glazing, allocated parking, communal garden. EPC: C



OLDbury, Causeway Green Road £425 pcm+ Fees
Deceptively large and spacious. A split level apartment above local shops, within walking distance to bus links for Oldbury, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, parking to rear, with the added bonus of a porch, unfurnished. EPC: D



LYE, High Street £425 pcm+ Fees
Located in the centre of Lye at Lye Cross. This split level flat above shops features a large lounge, kitchen with a dining area, 2 double bedrooms and a single bedroom, bathroom with shower, its own private garden terrace area, and is available immediately. EPC: TBC



LYE, High Street £395 pcm+ Fees
Located in the centre of Lye at Lye Cross. This 2nd floor flat above shops features a large lounge, kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower, and is available immediately. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Trinity Street £395 pcm+ Fees
House share in a large Victorian semi-detached home. Large furnished double bedroom available in this lovely period house, kitchen, bathroom and large lounge are all shared facilities, wi-fi broadband. Rent to include all bills. 2 people sharing will be £100 pcm extra. Available now. EPC: E

PROPERTY

Four-bedroom family home with conservatory



THIS large detached and improved family home in Market Street, Kingswinford, is for sale through Taylors at £379,950.

Spacious throughout with a reception hall, a ground floor guest WC, lounge with feature fireplace, luxury re-fitted family dining/living kitchen with appliances, a feature fireplace and French doors opening to a large conservatory, utility. There are four large bedrooms, house bathroom. Outside is a driveway, carport, garage and a large rear garden.

Call (01384) 401777 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk



Detached bungalow has been improved



THIS well-presented and improved modern detached bungalow in Chevening Close, Sedgley, occupies a wider than normal plot.

It is for sale through Wakeman at £189,950 with no chain.

With gas central heating and double glazing it has side entrance hall, living room with a marble fireplace and hearth, kitchen with white gloss fronted units, a built-in double oven with electric hob and cooker hood, integrated fridge and freezer.

There are two bedrooms with built-in wardrobes and mirror sliding doors, and a shower room.

Outside, the property has a driveway, gardens and a detached garage.

For further information contact Wakeman on 01902 885894 or visit www.wakeman-online.com





SHENSTONE VALLEY RD, HALESOWEN

LARGE family home with 5 DOUBLE bedrooms on private CORNER PLOT. 2 large reception rooms lead to CONSERVATORY. REFITTED breakfast kitchen & utility room. Master bedroom having EN-SUITE. Family bathroom with corner bath. DOUBLE garage & driveway. PRIVATE rear garden with patio. EPC rating: C Ref: D1671

QUINTON

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PERCIVAL ROAD, EDGBASTON

NO UPWARD CHAIN - Well presented home in pleasant CUL-DE-SAC position. Two 13ft reception rooms & REFITTED 19ft breakfast kitchen. 4 bedrooms & LUXURY REFITTED bathroom on 1st floor. Lawn garden with patio areas. GCH & UPVC DG fitted. EPC rating: D

BEARWOOD

£265,000



SHENSTONE VALLEY RD, HALESOWEN

DETACHED & EXTENDED family home in CUL-DE-SAC position. 13ft lounge & separate dining room/study. EXTENDED breakfast kitchen with separate utility room. 3 bedrooms & REFITTED bathroom on 1st floor. Driveway to front & DOUBLE GARAGE to rear. Lawn rear garden. GCH & DG fitted. EPC rating: E Ref: D1669

QUINTON

£259,950



SUMMERFIELDS AV, HALESOWEN

SPACIOUS terraced home with DRIVEWAY & garage. 15ft dining room on ground floor, 16ft lounge, 10ft breakfast kitchen & bathroom on 1st floor, 3 GOOD size bedrooms on 2nd floor. Majority GCH & DG fitted. EPC rating: TBC Ref: D1670

QUINTON

£134,950



PORTRAY ROAD, ROWLEY REGIS

NO CHAIN - LARGE CORNER PLOT position with LOTS OF PARKING! 24ft lounge diner, D/S WC & 10ft kitchen. 3 DOUBLE bedrooms & family bathroom with white suite. Gardens to front & rear. Gated DRIVEWAY to side. GCH & UPVC DG. EPC rating: E Ref: D1675

QUINTON

£129,950



STATION ROAD, CRADLEY HEATH

SPACIOUS home with GARAGE & DRIVEWAY. Having 2 separate reception rooms, FITTED kitchen & D/S WC. 3 GOOD size bedrooms & family bathroom with white suite on 1st floor. GCH & UPVC DG fitted. Small rear courtyard. EPC rating: E Ref: D1668

QUINTON

£129,950



WORCESTER ROAD, OLDBURY

NO UPWARD CHAIN - SPACIOUS terraced home with DRIVEWAY to front. 2 reception rooms & fitted kitchen with side passage. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom with WHITE SUITE. Lawn garden. GCH & majority DG fitted. EPC rating: D Ref: D1673

QUINTON

£119,950



RICKYARD PIECE, QUINTON

NO UPWARD CHAIN - Terraced home in CUL-DE-SAC position. 16ft lounge & 16ft kitchen diner. Benefits from D/S WC. 3 bedrooms & REFITTED shower room. UPVC DG & warm air central heating. Lawn rear garden. EPC rating: TBC Ref: D1674

QUINTON

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PERRY HILL ROAD, OLDBURY

NO CHAIN - 2nd floor flat with GARAGE & communal parking. Fitted kitchen & 16ft lounge diner. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms & bathroom with WHITE SUITE. Double glazing & NSH. Close to bus routes in Birmingham City Centre. EPC rating: TBC

QUINTON

£84,950



LANGLEY HIGH STREET, OLDBURY

SUPERB family home with CANAL views & having a DOUBLE garage with office space/bedroom above. 24ft games room, 18ft lounge & sitting room/bedroom 4. FITTED kitchen to rear leading to d/s shower room. 3 DOUBLE bedrooms on 1st floor, en-suite bathroom & REFITTED family bathroom. GCH

BEARWOOD

£295,000

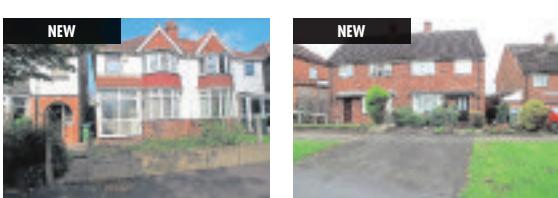


NORMAN ROAD, SMETHWICK

4 DOUBLE bed extended semi detached property, occupying a pleasant position:- 2 reception rooms, EXTENDED re-fitted breakfast kitchen, d/s shower room, off road parking and pleasant, good sized rear garden.. EPC: TBC; BEARWOOD OFFICE.

BEARWOOD

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HUGH ROAD, SMETHWICK

Spacious, Traditional style semi detached in popular neighbourhood, with NO UPWARD CHAIN, majority double glazing, gas radiator heating, with Porch, hall, spacious through lounge, kitchen, 3 BEDROOMS, bathroom, rear garden, garage/store at the rear. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC D.

BEARWOOD

£139,950



BLEAKHOUSE ROAD, OLDBURY

Deceptively spacious, semi detached property in popular location, WITH DELIGHTFUL GOOD SIZED REAR GARDEN, gas radiator heating, double glazing, having attractive lounge, dining/sitting room, kitchen, 3 BEDROOMS, shower/wet room, and DRIVE providing off road parking. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC tbc.

QUINTON

£139,950



ERNEST ROAD, SMETHWICK

Deceptively spacious, traditional style semi detached property in POPULAR NEIGHBOURHOOD, requiring inspection, with GARAGE, offering 2 RECEPTION ROOMS, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, separate wc, and PLEASANT REAR GARDEN. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC tbc.

BEARWOOD

£139,950



MANSION CRESCENT, SMETHWICK

UNFURNISHED - AVAILABLE NOW - Well presented & spacious home with DRIVEWAY. 15ft lounge & 16ft kitchen diner. D/S WC. 3 bedrooms & bathroom with white suite. Gardens to rear. UPVC DG & GCH. NO DSS, NO PETS, NO SMOKERS. EPC Rating: TBC - Subject to admin fee of £100 per tenant. DL202

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There is always 50 vehicles at Merry Hill for you to view, and consistently the company has access to 1,200 one owner cars with full service history, available to view online.

Many are still covered by the manufacturer's warranty and come with less than 10,000 miles.

Most of these ex-mobility cars are available within 48 hours, and the supply of automatics is a speciality.

The Oak Garage has opened a new

sales area, on the Pedmore Road, next to the traffic lights at Merry Hill, with plenty of parking on Sterling Park next to the office.

For this autumn, they are opening their new indoor showroom and office at Sterling Park, helping you to look around selected cars in comfort.

As the winter months approach many of the cars will be displayed indoors and you'll even get a welcome cup of tea or coffee.

In February this year, the business opened a promotional stand in the Cornbow Shopping Centre at Halesowen, where one of the very low mileage cars is always displayed for all to see. This always creates interest and the promotion has proved to be very successful. The stand is usually attended by one of the sales staff who will be more than happy to chat to you, and advise on all the options.

If you are looking for that special wheel chair access vehicle, pay The Oak Garage a visit.

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All cars are checked for safety and carry an MoT. The Oak Garage's after sales is second to none, with 12-month or 24-month warranties being available. Service plans can also be provided to help spread the cost of future maintenance.

For more details and to see cars online visit www.oakgarage.co.uk Best of all, visit The Oak Garage's impressive new showroom at Units 1-2 Sterling Park, Merry Hill, DY5 1TB. Alternatively call 01384 75097 for further details.

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Fuss-free Lexus NX300H

By Matt Joy

Even the thrills of more glamorous machinery can't dull the appeal of the hybrid Lexus.

I won't pretend for a second that motoring journalists aren't a spoilt lot. Even if cars don't do much for you, the idea of having a spanking-new motor on the driveway, paid for by someone else, has to be at least slightly appealing. But you may be surprised to learn that supercars aren't necessarily the last word in pleasure.

KFC (as the NX300h has come to be known) has delivered me safely and comfortably to various parts of the country, on several occasions in order to drive something considerably faster and more expensive; in one instance a car capable of over 200mph and costing more than £250,000.

You'd be forgiven for thinking then that climbing into the four-cylinder hybrid Lexus with its CVT gearbox and modest 112mph top speed would be a bigger comedown than January 1st 2000. But the reality is quite different.

It starts before you even climb aboard. With the small fob in your pocket, the keyless entry works seamlessly – a timesaver rather than pointless tech – and you just climb aboard and get comfortable without fuss.

Prod the starter button and the Lexus slips into electric mode straight away, which has proved a handy means of not waking up the neighbours when heading for the airport at 4am.

Starting at that time of day is never a pleasure, but the Lexus does a fine job of making life as easy as possible.

The essential large takeaway coffee sits happily in the cupholders, the low noise levels prevent issues with my sensitive early-morning brain and the radar cruise control is a motorway essential; it shares the workload of M-way drudgery with you and definitely leaves you feeling less tired than journeys without it.

It even manages to deal with the horrors of three moaning children in the back. Being able to recline the rear seat backs in a 60/40 split has come in handy on such occasions, namely to encourage the little darlings to go to sleep on long journeys rather than asking how long it is until we get there.

The leather seats have also done a fine job of repulsing whatever nightmarish combination of foodstuffs they see fit to redistribute, and a quick run over with the vacuum cleaner puts it right. I'd never have a car with cloth seats again, at least not until they've all turned 18.

I'm also convinced the NX300h has loosened up a little, as it seems to be ever more willing and able to deliver indicated fuel consumption well into the 40mpg region. I've yet to give it the full-on eco test run to the office and back, but as it's still two weeks until pay day, there's a good chance that will happen soon.

Sure, I'll never turn down a blat in a pricey supercar should the opportunity arise, but KFC's charms are increasingly welcome and prove the perfect antidote to the hustle and bustle of the real world. Unless you live on a desert island, that's a pretty useful thing to have.

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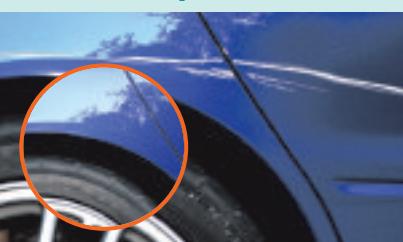
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Ceremony caps off the season for track riders

The track season at Halesowen finished with the annual awards.

In the freewheeler category (for the youngest riders where a track bike is not needed) Alex Brown finished on top ahead of Ellie Swinney (first girl) and Tomos Pattinson.

Massimo Di Vito took overall honours in Youth A, closely followed by Liam Allen and Ryan Brookes.

Youth B saw Alex Barker as winner followed by Nathan Burns and Joseph Brookes with Molly Lewis winning first girl.

In the senior categories the younger riders dominated with Charles Walker leading the way winning the series overall along with the sprinter's title and the junior title. Luke Hardman took second spot and professional Jacob Tipper completed the podium.

In the sprinter's league, Oliver Dighton took second overall with Jacob in third.

The women's category was won by Emma Grayson, Nick Crutchley took the honours in the B League and William Fotheringham in the Vets League.

Cyclo Cross Racing (CX)

As the track season comes to an end the cyclo cross season starts.

Approximately 50 riders from Halesowen Athletic and Cycling Club have taken part in the events with some highly placed in the league.

The pick of the bunch are Ella Harris in fourth in the U8s, Alex Barker in 3rd in the U12s, Simon Wylie running second in the U14s boys and Jamieson Blain in 5th in the U16s boys. In the adults the stand outs so far are Matthew Worrall and Ceris Styler.

Tividale are anchored at league bottom

Lincoln United 4 Tividale 0
TIVIDALE remain rock-bottom of the Evo-Stik Division One South after going down 4-0 at Lincoln United.

The home side took the lead after just 14 minutes when Tividale gave away a needless free-kick on the edge of the box and Lincoln wide man Paul Grimes fired the ball in.

On 41 minutes Lincoln doubled their score. Andrew Hutchinson's perfectly placed shot just grazed the inside of the post on its way into the net.

On 83 minutes it was déjà vu when skipper Philip Male was harshly judged to have given away a free-kick on the edge of the box and Daniel Brookes stepped up and his shot again arrowed into Christopher Jay's bottom right-hand corner.

Kallum Smith to netted a fourth.

Squad take champion's scalp

Luctonians 2nds 40 Old Halesonians 2nds 45
OLD Hales 2nds had a tremendous league victory against last season's League Champions.

After three league wins this season Old Hales 2nds lead Division 1 of the Midlands Reserve League.

Tries were scored by Leon Naif, Mike Topping, Sam Vaughan, Jake Shellis and Sam Foster scored two tries. Old Hales were also awarded a Penalty Try. Sam Vaughan converted five of the seven tries.

OH 3rds 55 Kidderminster 2nds 14

The planned game against Droitwich 2nds was rearranged at the request of Droitwich and Old Hales managed to pick up a friendly game against Kidderminster 2nds late in the week.

The first 10 minutes of the game were evenly balanced with both sides having good attacking opportunities.

The deadlock was broken when Old Hales were awarded a penalty ten metres from the Kiddy line.

The ball was moved swiftly out to the left for Alex Herbert to score in the corner.

The next 30 minutes were closely fought with both sides striving to gain the upper hand.

Old Hales were dominant in the scrum and from a Kiddy 'put in' gained possession.

Quick passing to the right released wing Callum Roberts on the halfway line; Roberts put in a great effort to evade the Kiddy defence to score.

The conversion was unsuccessful and the whistle blew for a half time score of 10-0.

Old Hales started the second half positively and after only three minutes the backs showed lovely hands to get the ball out to Phil Jukes who provided a well timed pass to Callum Roberts, who once again stepped on the gas to score a second long-range try.

The home side were now in command and after a strong run into the Kiddy half followed by several good phases of play, Jay Martin took the ball five metres out and powered his way to the line. Mark Wakefield added the conversion.

Bridgnorth 3rds 45 Old Halesonians 4ths 12
Derek Hill at age of 70 played a full game.

Old Hales show total dominance

Old Halesonians 1st 41 Old Northamptonians 3
HALES were prepared for their first home game having beaten Nuneaton and Syston in their first two difficult away fixtures.

The scene was set with great weather and pitch conditions and an expectant crowd.

The home side started strong but were over exuberant and after four minutes were penalised, the visitors converted to lead by three.

This was to be the last points for Old Northants as Hales started to dominate.

The pack led by skipper Rich Taylor took control in the scrum with his fellow front row, prop Louis Padian and hooker Sam Jones. Early pressure resulted in a penalty which Chris Hooper converted.

Hales then put pressure on the visitors with strong running from Tom King, Max McFarlane, Tom Jordan and new boy Guy Field. Dave Hadkiss orchestrated from nine and stand off Oli Rayner distributed well on his first outing for the club.

After 17 minutes Hadkiss fed Rayner to Ben Barkley in the centre to Carl Robinson and inside to wing Luke Smith who sprinted through the opposition backs. He fed Joe Oxford on the wing who dove into his opposite man, supported by Carl Robinson scored, Hooper converted.

Initiative

This gave Hales the upper hand and they took the initiative with some great passages of play. A line out in the opposition 22 resulted in another clean catch by King from Jones's throw and a driving maul.

After pressure by Tom Jordan and Owen Jones towards the line, Guy Field took the final drive for a well deserved try to lead 15-3 after 26 minutes.

From the restart Hales were back on the attack and another driving maul which Owen Jones took over for a try, converted by Hooper 2-3 at half time.

The second half saw changes for Hales, prop Matt Young on for Padian and Andy Robinson on for his brother Carl to partner Barkley in the centres. Possession again to the home side, interplay with Hooper, Barkley and Smith resulted in Robinson driving for the line and reaching for a great try, again converted by Hooper.



Owen Jones in the thick of the action during the match against Old Northamptonians

The visitors tried to respond but in all areas they were overcome by the power of the home side. The Hales scrum was solid, Young showing great continued promise on the loose head and the pack were totally dominant.

On 46mins a try by Tom King was converted by Hooper.

Again the visitors came back but the Hales defence was secure. After 60mins the pack provided more

ball for Hadkiss to move through Rayner, Barkley and Hooper to Andy Robinson. Luke Smith had been threatening all day and he out sprinted the defence to score.

DOR Gary Cox used his replacements with Sol Rogers making his debut on for Jordan and Carl Robinson back on for Barkley to partner his brother Andy in the centre. .

This week the First face Peterborough, KO off 2pm.

Swimmers defend the trophy for sixth time

SWIMMERS from Halesowen Swimming Club travelled to Braunstone for the annual trophy gala on Saturday.

The club was defending the trophy and were hoping to make it six wins in a row. After 10 events Halesowen were in joint first place with Braunstone A.

After 30 events Halesowen had surged ahead on 201 points to Braunstone's 189, but was short lived and Braunstone went into the lead.

Halesowen swimmers won the last four relay events, winning the gala and lifting the trophy for the sixth time in six years.

Double event winners were Josh Bradley in the 100m individual medley and 100m breaststroke, Kate Morrice in the 100m butterfly and 100m freestyle, and Niamh Larke in the 50m backstroke and 50m breaststroke.

Other individual winners were Jacob Bailey in the 50m backstroke, Olivia Jay, Amber Harrison, Robert Jennings and Callum Tinsdale in the 100m backstroke, Lily Merrell in the 100m breaststroke and Chloe Finch in the 100m freestyle.

The relay teams were strong winning 8 of the 16 relay events and included Olivia Jay, Georgia Lees, Emma Osbourne, Lauren Hill, Emily Jay, Emma Bird, Isobel Bowers, India Hanke, Jacob Darby, Mark Laing, Jakob Baker, James Cuthbert and Jack Simpson,

Final point scores were Halesowen - 329, Braunstone A - 323, Melton Mowbray - 250, Hinckley - 240, Market Harborough - 216, Coalville - 177, Witney & District - 146, and Braunstone B - 116.

Win puts seal on Div1 spot for George

South Staffs Division 1

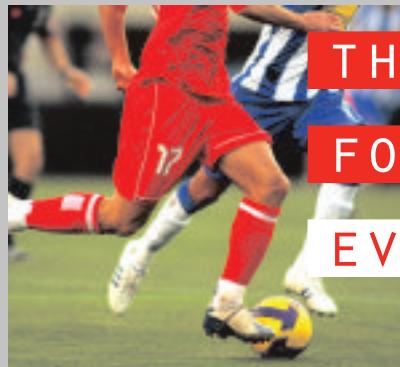
The George 232 Short Heath 181
The George entertained Short Heath needing to win to guarantee their place in division one.

A close first four saw The George trail, John Deakin (21-17) and Ivan Smout (21-18) winning it.

The match was still in the balance after the middle four, wins by Kevin Arnott (21-7) and Darren Wood (21-12) giving The George a 10 shot advantage.

A strong finish by the back four of Paul Hemming (21-8), Eric Winstone (21-9), Mark Street (21-12) and Marc Wilson (21-14) completed a 51 shot victory. Warwick & Worcester Premier 1: Tanworth 208 The George 194 (Stewart Meddings 21-8). Warwick & Worcester Alliance 1: The George 239 NIFO 188 (Bill Chiswell 21-6)

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Sport

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Plenty for DK runners to get stuck into

THERE were plenty of races for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club to feast on at the weekend.

The first was at Sutton Park for the Midlands Counties Road Relays with DK fielding a ladies and two men's teams in an regional championship event that attracted clubs from Stoke to the north, Nottingham to the east, Shrewsbury to the west and as far south as North Devon.

With the ladies going off first over the 4 x 4.315km course the team of Carol Fisher, Charlotte Tonks, Lisa Newell and Rebecca Warren finished in a total time of 1.27.58 to take 64th place of the 79 teams.

In the men's event over six legs at the slightly longer distance of 5.848km the team of Ben Foster, Matt Biggs, James Wright, Darren Bishop, Dave Norman and Simon Hughes came home in a total time of 2.10.16 in 39th.

The B team of Graham Wildgoose, Simon Blizzard, Mark Homer, Richard Tonks, Kieran Pitt and Pete Hood finished in 66th in 2.28.49 from 84 teams with Notts AC, Tipton Harriers and Cheltenham and County Harriers filling the medal positions.

Twenty four hours later a group of hoops lined up with international class athletes and European and Commonwealth medalist Jo Pavey in the Worcestershire 10k.

Craig Brown was first DK runner home in 38th in a chip time of 38.13, Simon Blizzard having doubled up over the weekend was 113th in 41.22, Liz Hettle was 292nd in 45.41, Kathryn Sneyd was 424th in 48.07, Lyn Sprague was 485th in 48.53, Sarah Cox finished in 53.33 in 914th, Dave Ede was 1094th in 56.08 and Baljit Watson the same time.

Gornal high five adds more woes for old foes Town

Gornal A 5 Tipton Town 1

HIGH-FLYING Gornal Athletic ensured there was no upset at the Garden Walk Stadium with a 5-1 demolition of old foes Tipton Town in the West Midlands Premier Division.

The visitors have had a calamitous start to the season with only one point from 10 games.

The home side powered ahead in the ninth minute through Luke Guy.

After a couple of scares Tipton fought back and were unlucky when, in the 17th minute Marvin Whitter's chip-shot seemed certain to tie up the scores until home skipper Matt Vaughan cleared.

Tipton were gradually coming into the picture and Matt Holland's strike from 25 yards equalised.

On 50 minutes, Gornal regained the initiative through a Danny Ludlow goal, and Ben Streeton hit third from 25 yards four minutes later.

Substitute Liam Morris weaved his way through a beleaguered Tipton defence to put Gornal 4-1 to the good after 71 minutes and Danny Crudginton completed the scoring.

Team win over champions

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Old Hales win first at home

Page 35



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Victory for DK adds to Walsall's woes

Dudley Kingswinford 46 Walsall 12

ALTHOUGH DK handed Walsall another defeat, the visiting team showed a significant improvement in several areas of their game.

Tries by Connah Jones and Rob Phillips with Kieran Pinches kicking a conversion and two penalties gave DK an 18-0 interval lead. But Walsall were far more competitive during the second half.

Indeed, a 60 metre break out of defence involving Andy Fitzgerald, Chris Mould and Dave Pitt should have resulted in a score.

But the hosts set up a counter attack which resulted in Stefan Shillingford going over near the posts. Walsall did gain the next score after Mould

Rugby

put centre Richard Clarke away on a 40 metre run before finding John Josh Williams in support to go over for the try.

Five minutes later it was a similar situation as Williams cut through and then found Pitt in support.

The Walsall winger outpaced the chasers and scored wide out.

But in scoring the try he sustained a leg injury and has now joined the ever growing group of injured Walsall players. The visitors were pressing

again and were having far more control of the game. The crucial score came a few minutes later.

Captain Neil Pittaway made a break, he was well supported by Fitzgerald, Benson, Weaver and the Walsall backs.

The final pass would have resulted in a certain try, but the pass was intercepted and winger Nicholas Adams raced 90 metres for the try.

The visitors tried to mount further attacks but it was DK that got the final scores as they ran with the ball at every opportunity.

Matthew Squire and Danny Hawkins going over for try apiece. Pinches added the extras.

The games don't get any easier for Walsall.

TD succumb to second half fury

WEM Town 2 Team Dudley 1

The third of five consecutive away trips saw The Students heading Shrewsbury way for a match against Wem at Butler Sports Centre.

TD travelled with injuries and suspensions taking their toll as Nathan Jones and Liam McEvoy were named on the bench despite not being fully fit, the loss of James Hawthorne to suspension saw Steve Whitehouse take the armband.

With Kyle Green injured and Liam Jones completing his FA Goalkeeping course Marc Lawrence stepped between the sticks. He was tested early doors by a Darren France strike.

Steve Whitehouse fired low and hard into the bottom corner for TD.

Within four minutes of the restart Wem were level as Matty Owen scored, the goal came with controversy as Wem broke from a foul on Sam Lee in the penalty area, the penalty was waved away despite the midfielder in agony in the box, the counter was seemingly stalled but Owen lunged in on Alex Pinches with a studs-showing move that then bounced beyond Lawrence and into the corner.

Wem then took the lead just before the hour mark as Jack Clements whipped in a cross. It was met by Shane Owen's unchallenged, head and that diverted the ball past Lawrence as TD found Wem's high intensity start to the half tough to deal with.

TD struggled to find openings from then on it and keeping possession was made harder with Wem constantly in the faces of the Students forcing mistakes and the final chance fell to the home side as Sean Butler saw his shot high across a goal tipped over by Lawrence who did a sterling job as stand in.

HALES FIRST IS YELTZ FOURTH

Halesowen Town 1 Marine 0

HALESOWEN recorded a fourth victory with on-loan Reece Hales claiming his first goal for the winner.

Marine created the best chance within the first minute but home goalkeeper Dan Platt made a fine reflex save from Chad Whyte after James Short delivered a great cross.

The Mariners continued to look lively, especially down the left flank, and Menagh's cross was scuffed just wide by Whyte.

Greg Pearson earned Halesowen's first corner in the 14th minute and another in the 17th resulted in visiting goalkeeper Matty Cooper finally gathering after Asa Charlton's header was initially cleared.

A low shot from Pearson fell just wide but in-form Marine ended the first half on top as a 25-yard, low, raking shot from Lewis Codling was gathered by Platt.

Marine's neat football continued to come up against a solid wall of Yeltz defenders early in the second half, although Codling fired just wide of Platt's post after trying his luck with a long range effort.

Hales hit Halesowen's winner beyond the Marine defensive wall and into the bottom corner of the net directly from a low 22 yard free-kick after 61 minutes.

The Mariners wasted a golden chance to level after 72 minutes when a short back-pass from Rob Elvins left Andy Owens with just goalkeeper Platt to beat, but Platt made a fine blocking save.

Frickley Athletic 1 Halesowen 2

Two goals in the last 10 minutes from Keyen Raffel saw Halesowen come from behind in Yorkshire to get their third win in a row.

Raffel has now scored three goals since he joined the club on loan from Kidderminster Harriers.

The first half was even, with the teams only separated by a strike from Jacob Hazel in the 34th minute for Frickley.

Gradually Halesowen found their way into the game and Raffel reduced the lead on 84 minutes before scoring the winner three minutes later with a great strike.

Wolves fall again to Boro curse



James Henry of Wolverhampton Wanderers and Adam Reach of Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough 3 Wolves 0

NONE of the players on show at the Riverside had been born the last time Wolves won away at Middlesbrough.

Neither had Kenny Jackett. In fact Steve Morgan and Jez Moxey hadn't either, such is the quite incomprehensible rotten record Wolves have in this particular part of the north east.

And if Wolves don't break the hoodoo when they return to the Riverside in March in the Championship, you wonder how many of the above will still be at Wolves when the run, currently at 24 winless matches in 64 years,

finally ends. Defensive mistakes, once more, littered this Wolves performance, with opposition players left unmarked at crucial moments and Ethan Ebanks-Landell dropping a howler for the opening goal.

Jackett made nine changes from the side that drew 0-0 with Brighton, many enforced with a host of players injured.

On 37 minutes Boro took a deserved lead when Ebanks-Landell got in a right muddle and scuffed the ball into Adomah's path. And it was no surprise when the home side doubled their lead with Fabbrini lashing past Ikeme from 15 yards on 57 minutes.

Boro finished it through Adomah.

Barbarians are still looking for first win

BIRMINGHAM Barbarians rugby club are still searching for their first win of the season after losing out 31-12 to Rugeley II in an absorbing Merit Table clash at their Moor Lane HQ.

A young and inexperienced Barbarians side started strongly but it was the visitors who drew first blood with two early tries.

Leon Robinson got the hosts back in it as the No.8 touched down under the posts. Kirk McWee converted.

Rugeley notched a third try just before the break to lead 19-7 at half-time.

Two further tries from the visitors killed off any Barbarians' comeback.

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